Commentary
March 1997

How the Intellectuals Took Over (And What to Do About It)

David Gelernter

Johnnie Cochran's Secret
Christopher Caldwell

Intermarriage, Inc.
Wendy Shalit

How Not to Deal With China
Arthur Waldron

The Witches of Arthur Miller
Midge Decter

Schubert Lives
Terry Teachout

Gay Rights and Wrongs: An Exchange
Norman Podhoretz and Critics

Books in Review
Richard Pipes • Alan Mintz • Wilfred M. McClay
Seth Cropsey • Sol Stern

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Commentary
March 1997

Letters from Readers

Gay Rights and Wrongs

To the Editor:

I cannot address the unreason in Norman Podhoretz's polemic against lesbian and gay equality ["How the Gay-Rights Movement Won," November 1996], but may I make two personal points? The first is Mr. Podhoretz's misrepresentation of my book, *Virtually Normal*. Nowhere in the book do I argue, as he claims, that extramarital outlets "should be recognized by both parties in a same-sex marriage." The sentence to which he refers is discussing the state of affairs in gay male relationships *before* same-sex marriage has been legalized. Part of the point of same-sex marriage, I argue in the central chapter of the book, is to provide an incentive for monogamy to be achieved. I have now publicly clarified this several times, most prominently in the *Washington Post* this summer. In the afterword to the paperback edition of the book, I explicitly wrote, in response to the deliberate distortion of this sentence: "[I]t is my view that, in same-sex marriage, adultery should be as anathema as it is in heterosexual marriage." Is Mr. Podhoretz unaware of these statements? Or does he merely want to be unaware? It is one thing to disagree with an intellectual opponent. It is another thing consciously and systematically to misrepresent him.

It is also another thing to impugn his character. Mr. Podhoretz, in one of the ugliest of many ugly detours in his piece, says the following:

> [M]any homosexuals (including Andrew Sullivan himself, as we learned when he announced upon resigning from the editorship of the *New Republic* that he had contracted the AIDS virus) are willing to court death rather than give up being promiscuous.

This is simply vile. Is Mr. Podhoretz aware that merely one encounter with HIV is sufficient to contract the disease? Or is his general loathing of lesbians and gay men so arbitrary that he feels able to impugn any one of us with his generalized prejudice? I had hoped we could conduct a civilized debate about this topic without this kind of personal invective. Mr. Podhoretz proves me wrong.

This isn't the first time this tactic has been used. Mark Steyn, in what Mr. Podhoretz calls a "brilliant little piece" in the *American Spectator*, put a quote in my mouth boasting of alleged promiscuity some two years ago. I have no memory of such a remark, and Steyn has no independent evidence for it. But it is printed just the same, part of the neo-McCarthyism now prevalent on both sides of the political spectrum: if you can't win the argument, smear, discredit, or misrepresent your opponents. That Commentary would stoop to these kinds of tactics is deeply depressing. And it is surely the real reason the "Gay-Rights Movement Won." We have arguments. Mr. Podhoretz has merely bile.

Andrew Sullivan
New Republic
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Having been so often denounced by other gay writers and journalists as a "right-winger" and "neocon" because of my writings against gay-identity politics, the gay politicization of the academy, and the narcissistic culture of "queer" protest, I cannot tell you what a relief it is to be criticized, however obliquely, in the pages of Commentary. Still, in paraphrasing my recent *New York* magazine cover story about the "heterosexualization of gay culture," Norman Podhoretz oversimplifies a complex argument.

Mr. Podhoretz declares

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that I "complain" about this assimilationist trend, "lament[ing]," for instance, the fact that there is less "avid sexuality" than family values in today's gay books and plays; reading this, one would get the impression that I am one of those "lust-driven" young men he is so agitated about. But my observations about, e.g., the shift in focus from sex to family in the most recent gay literature were part of a larger, essentially aesthetic argument: that whatever its drawbacks, the seething, ghettoized gay culture of an earlier, pre-assimilationist era produced a more distinctive and culturally interesting art, theater, and literature. But to observe that this is so is hardly to argue in favor of the ghetto itself—much less to advocate all the attitudes and behaviors that flourished within it. I can (and do) also lament the passing of the vibrant Yiddish literature and theater of my grandfather's day, without wanting to move back to his *shtetl*, or for that matter to East Fourth Street.

At the very beginning of my *New York* article, and indeed in numerous articles on this subject—including the one that appears in Bruce Bawer's collection *Beyond Queer* (which, had he actually read it, Mr. Podhoretz would have recognized as a polemic against "queer" thinking, instead of merely citing it, rather bizarrely, as an example of "queer" books)—I acknowledge the benefits of "mainstreaming," and disdain social and especially intellectual ghettos. Yet as Jews know better than most, assimilation has its costs; and I thought it worthwhile, in the *New York* piece, to explore those costs a little—to catalogue the uneasy, sometimes grotesque, products of a once-distinct subculture's attempt to mimic the ideology and rhetoric of an often still-hostile mainstream.

But, of course, the phenomenon is one with which Mr. Podhoretz's COMMENTARY audience is already well acquainted.

DANIEL MENDELSOHN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Gay people essentially, sometime preening notwithstanding, live to themselves. Few are the places in majoritarian culture where we are welcome—truly welcome—without being perceived as posing a threat. True, in New York literary circles straight people beautifully invite gay friends to their parties. Many of us living outside New York would barely know; for once we came out, few of our old straight friends ever invited us back. (There was, for example, the embarrassed and gratuitous explanation of one prominent Washingtonian: "We wanted to invite you and your, ah, friend, you know, but, we already had a *Jewish* couple coming. . . .")

So when one of America's literary lions says we have *won*, it is sobering to think what it might have been like to lose. But after reading Norman Podhoretz's brilliant discourse on our *victory*, I still pondered, what *is* our threat, that he could conclude that, even if all the Supreme Court supported us, he would withhold his weighty consent to our supposedly irresistible advance. That Mr. Podhoretz rests his argument on the usual prurient and breathless (yes, and shameful) mockery of us to which we are accustomed (". . . promiscuous anal intercourse and other joys of gay sex. . . .") might tempt us not to take him seriously. Not on your life.

A specter is haunting marriage—that of the weariness and dissonance pressing upon union far longer and more equal, more shaken by possibilities previously undreamed, by hopes that other ages had relentlessly to put aside. And homosexuals, so "animated," so "butterfly free of choice," are the chattering skulls at the age-long feast which seeks to bind human sexuality to loyalty and nurture. Let no one doubt, however, that the tasks and opportunities of love possess the hearts of homosexuals no less than those of the sisters and brethren of the larger world. But it is surely hard to be blamed for promiscuity by those who deny us marriage. We will win through to fulfillment and new vision side by side with heterosexuals or not at all; for this is one of the great quests of common humanity.

So one understands why conservative analysts fear for the family and look for scapegoats, demonizing a sexual minority. "Men using one another as women constitutes a perversion," thunders Mr. Podhoretz and not Mr. Podhoretz alone. Much terrible history is on his side, but not much humanity and not much understanding. From what moral base does he so speak *ex cathedra*? This is not an argument. As a gay man I have never deemed that I do use another man as a woman, but what on earth difference does it make and how does it become his business what we do in bed? We don't want to know what he and Midge Decter do in the bedroom, but—aha!—in the majoritarian culture all manner of dicta, including prurient ones, are allowed.

Mr. Podhoretz ultimately hinges his argument on the choice of identity that at least some "wavering" gay-disposed young men may make: which would

> force them to "settle down" in exchange for the comforts and pleasures of a stable home and the delights and the troubles, the challenges and the anxieties, that together constitute the rich fascination of fathering and raising children.

I was married for fifteen years to a woman, and am the close father of three extraordinary children. Early this year there was a scandal at Stanford involving a football player inviting football applicants to send unclothed pictures. There turned out to be felonies involved. Nowhere was the word "gay" mentioned in the reportage until the *Stanford Daily*'s Nick Thompson, its well-known liberal columnist and a varsity athlete, wrote that the issue was the nurturance—or lack thereof—that Stanford offered gay people, whatever the guilt of the football player involved. And then he gave *his* credentials to speak, noting that his father was gay and when his father came out, it was as painful to him as for his gay friends when they themselves came out. Nick made a moral choice in speaking out, arguing that people had a right to be what they were and that society should not be in the business of suppressing it.

The conservative *Stan-*

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ford Review replied that for once they agreed with him. Had Stanford offered a nurturing atmosphere a generation ago—when Nick's father went there—they "wouldn't [now] have to deal with Nick." It was funny and tacky, but an emblem of conceded victory, perhaps. I had never been prouder.

Without question a person like myself today would have a greater likelihood of choosing the gay world at the start, bringing his heart into line with his senses. True, in my case I would have missed fathering the three most important people in my life. But 30 years ago it was a narrower, meaner, less honest choice. For me there was no option of being gay. Moreover, gay men can father children today; a Hawaiian court has ruled decisively on the question of whether gay parenting endangers children. But no one today need feel compelled by society into marriage when the odds against it are so dismal for anybody—and overwhelming if one is gay.

So Mr. Podhoretz's "comforts and pleasures" are not what they used to be. Women's autonomy in the world of work ever opening upward and charged with new choices in life overall has filled many men with fear. It is now women who initiate most divorce suits. And the notion of a world where men may have sex and *enjoy it*, without women, is, indeed, threatening.

Mr. Podhoretz's essay makes a sad template for the diatribe of any "unreconstructed mind," to use his own self-description: for the racist up through the 1960's, for the tame "intellectual" of the Third Reich on Jews, for the Hutu speaking today of Tutsis. . . .

In making explicit its fear, blinding anger, and hatred, this short essay has done more good for a cause its author so detests than one could have imagined. Honesty imparts a clarity to attitudes which shame and cowardice might otherwise obscure. For that honesty at least, we may thank Mr. Podhoretz.

W. SCOTT THOMPSON
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Poor Norman Podhoretz! He doesn't have a clue as to the forces and motivations behind the gay-rights movement. Like his radical-religious cohorts who cannot extricate themselves from a conceptual morass of "sin" and "immorality" on the question of homosexuality to engage in rational discussion and consideration of gay rights, Mr. Podhoretz cannot get beyond "perversion" and promiscuity. He indicates not the slightest awareness or comprehension of the factually well-founded burning sense of injustice which has driven the gay-rights movement from its inception and continues to drive it. . . . Nowhere does he even acknowledge the reality (or even the existence) of the pervasive anti-gay discrimination which provides the primary animation of the movement.

I write as a longtime gay activist who founded the gay movement here in Washington, D.C. in 1961 and with it gay militancy and activism nationally. In 1968, I coined the slogan, "Gay Is Good," which expresses a moral absolute. As a scientist by training and background, I was one of those who, about 1963, initiated the effort to reverse the characterization by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) of homosexuality as an illness; though this was accomplished through political action, it was soundly based scientifically, Mr. Podhoretz to the contrary notwithstanding.

My involvement with the movement was triggered when my incipient career as a scientist was nipped in the bud in 1957 when I was fired, for no reason other

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than that I was gay, by a federal government which then had a policy of exclusion of gay people *per se* that was as rigorously administered and as ferociously enforced as the current ban on gays in the military. This policy set the tone and served as an example for all private employment in this country that is still widely followed, creating a real need for the Employment Nondiscrimination Act. . . .

As a homosexual American citizen, I put my life in jeopardy fighting for this country in front-line combat in Europe in World War II. Therefore, for me and for my fellow gays, explicitly as gays, this is our country, our society, and our culture fully as much as it is that of Mr. Podhoretz and his fellow non-gays. Everything it provides, including employment, housing, self-respect, and happiness are our birthright and our heritage. We are not about to allow all this to be stolen from us by a gaggle of two-bit little homophobic bigots such as Mr. Podhoretz and his ideological henchpeople. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz's entire antipathy seems to rest upon an assertion that homosexuality is a "perversion." The term "sexual perversion" is devoid of objective meaning, . . . expressive of visceral disapproval but of nothing rational. . . . Cogent arguments can easily be made for characterizing as sexual perversions (1) voluntary sexual abstinence, celibacy, or retention of virginity past puberty; and (2) long-term monogamy (more than about four years), especially by males.

Much more important: what is wrong with, or objectionable about, engaging in, a good, enjoyable sexual perversion (by any definition) as long as it is consensual for all persons involved? Obviously nothing! Such enjoyment is clearly subsumed under the guaranteed, inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness given to us by our nation's birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence, and which is the basic, bedrock, unifying American ethical and moral principle which defines America and provides the very *raison d'être* for this country. That clearly includes homosexuality, however characterized.

Let us have more and better enjoyment of more and better sexual perversions (consensually engaged in) by more and more people. Individually, collectively, societally, culturally, and nationally, we will all be better off. So much for Mr. Podhoretz's inane objections to homosexuality and the gay-rights movement. . . .

FRANKLIN E. KAMENY
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz suggests it is politics and not science that keeps homosexuality off the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders. As a psychiatrist-psychoanalyst who has been involved in the area of psychopathology and homosexuality for more than 25 years, I disagree. . . .

There is no question that in the early 1970's, the gay-activist movement included an arm that attempted to apply political pressure to organized psychiatry to delete homosexuality from the diagnostic nomenclature.

Simultaneously, however, organized psychiatry was in the throes of an even larger intellectual upheaval about the diagnosis of mental disorders than one limited to sexual orientation. Until the 1970's, the basic model for conceptualizing psychological functioning in psychiatry was psychoanalytic. Unconscious conflicts were thought to lead to most behavioral symptoms and syndromes. Homosexuality was believed to result from such conflicts. At about that time, however, the beginnings of a knowledge explosion in the neural sciences and descriptive psychiatry occurred. This was associated with radical revision of the way that mental-health professionals conceptualized the mind, and particularly psychological functioning in health and illness. Great emphasis was placed on the necessity for demonstrating with validity and reliability that people who suffered from mental disorders were impaired in their capacity to function, and/or experienced intense distress.

The formal description of mental disorders that is accepted by American psychiatry as a whole is published in a volume called the *Diagnostic and Statistical Nomenclature*, or *DSM* for short. The *DSM-II* published in the late 1960's was basically psychoanalytic in its approach. The *DSM-III* published in 1980 was descriptive and not psychoanalytic. In the *DSM-III* and in today's version, the *DSM-IV*, lists of specific symptoms are provided for each mental disorder. . . .

When subjected to modern standards for assessing psychopathology generally, homosexuality does not in itself qualify as being a mental disorder. People who are predominantly or exclusively homosexual are not more likely than people who are predominantly or exclusively heterosexual to experience disability or even distress (except for the distress resulting from being victims of social prejudice). Moreover, the theory that homosexuality results primarily from pathological unconscious conflicts has not been adequately supported by empirical data, and has been abandoned by most modern mental-health professionals, including psychoanalysts.

Accompanying the dramatic and highly visible struggles about homosexuality that occurred and continue to take place throughout American society were conflicts about the validity of psychoanalytic psychology as a model of the mind. Some psychoanalytic authorities who had published case studies and speculative theories about sexual orientation in the 1960's and 70's continued to assert their authority, mostly in non-professional publications and interviews. Even today, some of these hold to their beliefs that homosexuality is in fact a mental disorder. Although once speaking for the profession as a whole, they no longer represent the majority view. The major national organizations, not only of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers but of psychoanalysts as well, no longer accept the view that homosexuals, simply by virtue of being homosexual, are mentally ill. . . .

RICHARD C. FRIEDMAN, M.D.
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry
Cornell University Medical College
New York City

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TO THE EDITOR:

. . . As an ordained Orthodox rabbi I make a poor defender of the gay-liberationist faith, but Mr. Podhoretz's article requires, in my view, a response from within the tribe. I do not doubt the sincerity of his moral outrage. I just cannot imagine how a Jew in this century manages to play the game of anti-Semites. His tone and arguments are chillingly reminiscent of writers in prewar Germany who shared much of his outrage at the lost hegemony of a certain kind, the right kind, of man.

If Mr. Podhoretz wonders how an Orthodox rabbi can sidestep the Levitical description of homosexual intercourse as an "abomination," let me remind him that the Hebrew word *to'eva* does not mean perversion. In Genesis 43:32 Joseph's brothers return and are seated separately from the Egyptians because it is a *to'eva* (abomination) for the Egyptians to break bread with Hebrews. Eating pork is an "abomination" in Deuteronomy 14. As far as I can tell, eating pork is a rather ordinary affair for most people. The fact that the Torah prohibits homosexual intercourse is another matter. Why and under what conditions is a contemporary dilemma that cannot be solved by Mr. Podhoretz's feelings of disgust.

What bothers Mr. Podhoretz is the growing legitimation of what he calls perversion, by which I assume he means the perversion of nature. Homosexuality for him is a violation or corruption of the natural, a disease, treatable or not, which, while tragic for individuals, ought not to be normalized. But nature can never unambiguously ground an epistemology. There is no unmediated appeal to Nature. Nature is a text that can say almost anything we want it to say, while appearing to have said nothing but what is evident. . . .

European anti-Semites of the last century thought Jews to be a violation of nature. The friendly non-Jewish advocates of the emancipation of Jews in England and France claimed that what appeared to be the "natural" diseases of the Jews were induced by the social degradations to which they were subject. Others insisted that these corruptions were innate and that no emancipation would correct them. This is a mirror image of the debate which Mr. Podhoretz cites regarding homosexuals.

The parallel between gay liberation and the emancipation of the Jews at the end of the 18th and into the 19th centuries is truly salient. . . . One must remember that there was a certain loss in the Christian world when Jews were emancipated: . . . Christians lost the sweet myth of wholeness, the feeling of being the primordial Adam, the natural paragon of humanity. This is the loss that white males are facing now, and the loss that heterosexuals will be facing in the years to come. It is this loss that Mr. Podhoretz can already envision and wishes to mourn. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz and other conservatives like him make use of a strange ideology that employs a crass depiction of masculinity and male sexuality in order to keep male heterosexual privilege in place. . . . The uncontrollable wildness of male sexual desire becomes a rhetorical device, justifying certain attitudes toward women and gay men. . . . If only wild men tamed by women are real men, then gay men are either doubly untamed (the dangerous hypermale) or innately tame and not real men (the hateful "faggot"). It is a strange and eerie fact that Jewish men were depicted in Nazi propaganda as sometimes a dangerous sexual threat and sometimes not men at all. It

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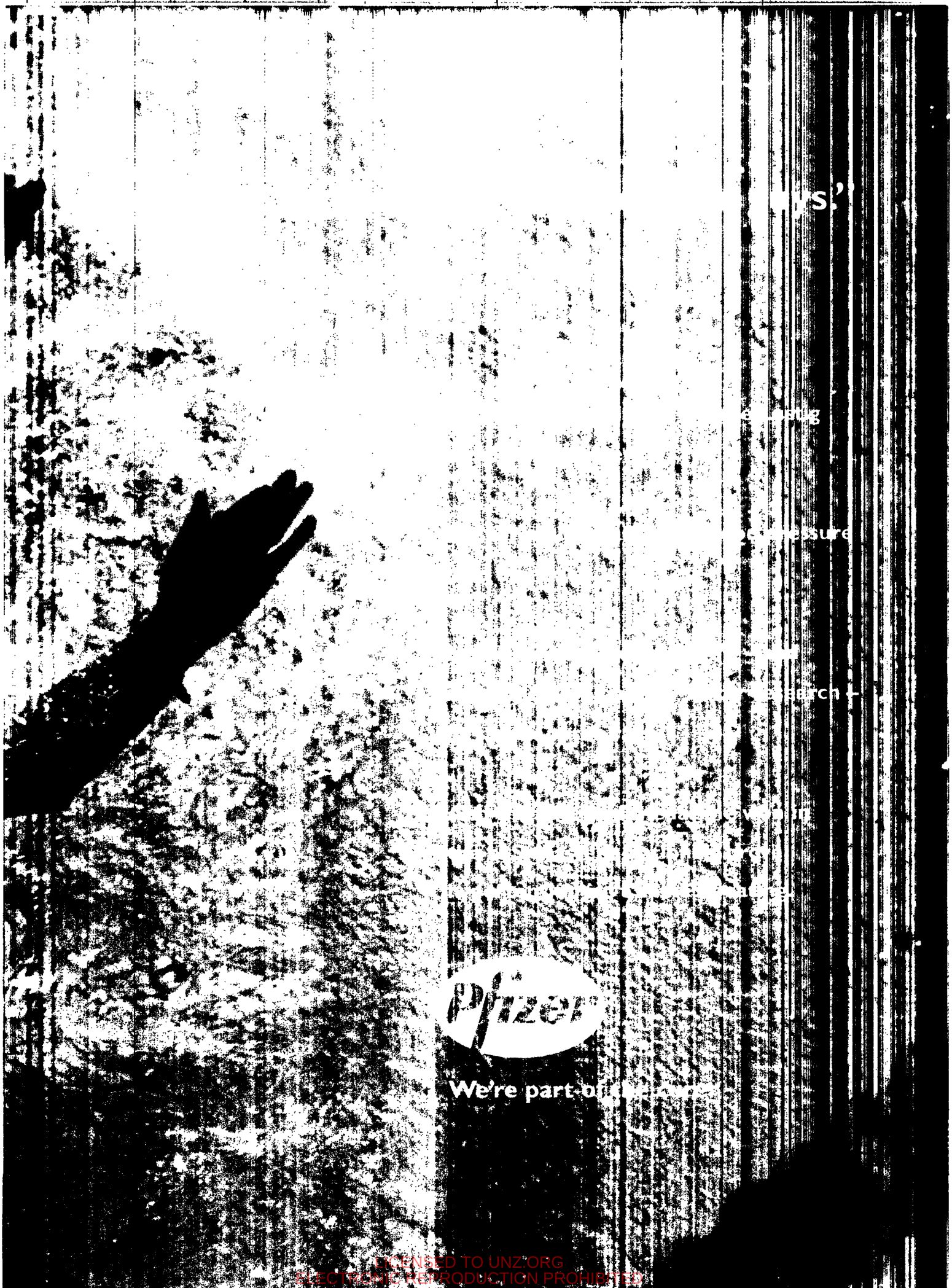

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is no accident that both homosexuals and Jews required a "Final Solution." . . .

As a traditionalist, I tend to feel that lives dedicated to prowling for the next liaison are debilitating and that many gay men do get stuck in adolescent sexual habits that leave them unfulfilled, longing for something more authentic, something deeper. But how can a self-understanding of perversity and disease lead to any other set of choices? What Mr. Podhoretz and others miss is that gay liberation is, for the present, the only way to work against these problems. . . .

We all need to learn how better to love. Gays are not the problem, nor is gay liberation. In times of great change and upheaval, Mr. Podhoretz should remember how volatile this kind of scapegoating can be.

[RABBI] YAAKOV LEVADO
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

. . . Norman Podhoretz believes that "men using one another as women constitutes a perversion. . . ." Why? Because it is prohibited in the Book of Leviticus? Then one should support the stoning of adulteresses, which is mandated in both the Bible and the Quran—and practiced in Saudi Arabia. . . . On Yom Kippur, Jews pray for forgiveness for their sins, including the sin of causeless hatred. Mr. Podhoretz's disapproval of homosexuals may not be hatred, but it certainly is causeless.

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
College of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

. . . On the issue of homosexuality, it seems, conservatives may have strong passions but very little intellectual common ground and almost no political consensus. . . . What makes cases involving conservatives so interesting are the tendencies to oppose what they often admit is a personal issue in political terms and to deny the parallels between anti-gay prejudice and other sometimes violent forms of intolerance.

Take Norman Podhoretz's lamentation. From the abundance of notes and allusions, the writer . . . deserves credit at least for bothering to read what gay people have to say about the complicated state of our movement for dignity and equal rights. He also acknowledges that in his own experience homosexuals " . . . tended to be amusing companions." Well might he say so after conversations with such typical right-wing wits as Lou Sheldon, Paul Cameron, and James Dobson.

The good will that Mr. Podhoretz appears to feel for some gays on a personal level (as do many of his peers) makes his political stance on homosexuality seem all the more callous. In deploring the progress gays have made toward acceptance and full citizenship, he bemoans that ". . . not even the knowledge of its connection with AIDS can tarnish or compromise its [homosexuality's] new reputation as a normal and healthy 'orientation.'"

Mr. Podhoretz, still, like many conservatives trying to find a grounding for anti-gay politics, extrapolates from a twisted conception of gay men, . . . casting them as disease-spreading creatures for whom the "danger of infection" obscures almost every other reality and hope. He mentions AIDS 21 times in the article. As a kind of self-evident dismissal, he raises the specter of the doom the disease poses to the lives of three individuals whose work he cites.

Of gay men, he opines flatly that ". . . the life they live is not as good as the life available to men who make their beds with women." And, in what may strike some readers as simply a matter of perspective and others as an unwitting condemnation of sexism, he asserts that ". . . men using one another as women constitutes a perversion." . . .

Yet the rhetoric of Mr. Podhoretz's own article reminded me of appeals to anti-Semitism rooted in the idea that there was something unhealthy and menacing about Jews. Like Mr. Podhoretz, those promoting such scare tactics—derived from centuries-old undercurrents that emerged as the hideous overtones in the 1930's and 40's—seemed to take for granted that the prevailing standard for Jewish identity should be shame. It is with seeming nostalgia that he recalls how, just a few decades ago, homosexuals ". . . mostly seemed to share in the almost universally held assumption that there was something wrong with homosexuality." . . .

While those on different parts of the political spectrum have their own hangups with homosexuality, conservatives hasten to put their anxieties in political terms. Those terms are becoming increasingly full of fractures. Gay-rights supporters, rather than simply writing off all anti-gay conservatives as "extremists," would do well to refute their assertions when possible and probe those splits at every opportunity. For as divisions widen, anti-gay politics loses not only credibility but its very core.

MARVIN LIEBMAN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz omits an important reason for the success of the gay-rights movement. Those fields in which homosexuals seem to excel, such as the arts, entertainment, and design, are becoming more important in the economy. So gays, like the Jews in the early years after World War II, are gaining power and acceptance because of their economic clout. Homosexuals now have the money with which to help finance congressional campaigns and are assuming more positions of power and authority throughout many industries.

But an alarming point raised by Mr. Podhoretz is that, with homosexuality gaining greater acceptance, more boys and young men may tilt toward homosexuality rather than going straight.

Although nobody really knows what causes male homosexuality, I think it is probably a social disability—an inability to have the kind of intimate relationship that women quite reasonably expect and demand. At the deepest emotional level, homosexuals are loners. The gay man is probably drawn to males, not primarily because of their bodies, but because of their far less demanding emotional requirements. Therefore, those young boys and men who do not have this social disability may "experiment" with homosexuality but are unlikely to cross over. There

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is pervasive homosexual behavior in English public schools and American prisons. Yet young men get out of both places and immediately return to a straight life.

A recent study of sex in America notes that there are many more unmarried males in their twenties through their forties who are virgins than who are homosexuals. Perhaps now some of these men will turn from deep loneliness to homosexuality. Is it not better for a man to have sex with a man than with nobody? Especially since it can be done safely. And is it not better for a man to fall in love with another man, no matter how flawed the experience, than to fall in love not at all?

So the increasing acceptance of homosexuality is all to the good. It, of course, makes homosexuals themselves more comfortable and happier—no inconsiderable accomplishment—and may ease the loneliness of some hitherto chaste males.

ROBERT W. WILSON
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

It is odd to see the victory of gay rights announced in the same week by the *New York Times* magazine (Andrew Sullivan) and by COMMENTARY (Norman Podhoretz). The latter admission is of course the more significant, and Mr. Podhoretz displays a remarkable realism and candor. But he cannot explain what happened. He attributes this to "the culture." Yet he knows the culture has for years grown steadily more conservative, and at the same time steadily more favorable to gays, and he sees nothing in this but an insoluble contradiction. I suggest a simple explanation: the gays had the better of the argument.

The most relevant Scriptural passage here is not Genesis 19 (Sodom and Gomorrah) but 1 Samuel 17 (David and Goliath). The marginalized, uncertain, amateurish gay movement always had a set of clear and cogent arguments. Its well-funded and arrogant opposition, backed by all the powers of church and state, used arguments philosophically flawed to the core, in ways fairly obvious to most secular intellectuals, including many conservatives like myself, and their attempts to provide utilitarian, "scientific" support for what was essentially a religious taboo had the air of elaborate quackery associated with creation science.

Even Mr. Podhoretz's defense, which is far more lucid than most I have seen, is really a strange argument. It is an argument against promiscuity (a solid one), but not about homosexuality *per se*. He is certainly correct that there is an intrinsic element of promiscuity in male homosexuality simply because men are by nature more promiscuous than women. That seems to imply, perhaps inadvertently, an endorsement of lesbianism. It ought to imply that society should give some support to those gay men who succeed at

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monogamy in spite of nature. Mr. Podhoretz recognizes their existence but inexplicably will not give them an inch.

The argument has no obvious implications for the small minority of men who are in some way or another congenitally homosexual (under 2.6 percent, Mr. Podhoretz thinks) because they hardly have real marriages anyway. It seems to apply to nobody except the hypothetical category of "waverers" who might be lured away from marriage by homosexual promiscuity. One has read impassioned pleas for these people before in COMMENTARY. The problem is that there is no evidence they exist outside its pages. This is an argument for the severe punishment of large numbers of the real in order to "save" for the "comforts and pleasures" of domesticity some few of the probably fictive.

After listening to these tortured arguments for 30 years, the culture, outside of the religious Right, generally decided the gay-rights movement is after all closer to "the fundamental realities of life."

DOYNE DAWSON
Greensboro, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

It seems like wasted breath even to attempt a response to Norman Podhoretz's wearying expression of Archie Bunker bigotry. Mr. Podhoretz's anti-homosexual ruminations hardly pretend to the status of arguments. After reading his article to the end—difficult enough—this much is clear: all the windy paragraphs of mock social science serve just to embellish Mr. Podhoretz's guttural assertion that "men using one another as women constitutes a perversion." To the mind of the bigot such declarations are always "obvious," "self-evident," and based on "fundamental realities." That, of course, is true perversion; my homosexual brain is taxed even to answer it.

Mr. Podhoretz's main historical thesis—that homosexuality has gradually been accepted by what he calls "the culture" despite the resistance of "the polity"—is based on an astoundingly lax use of terms. What, exactly, constitutes "the polity"? Anti-homosexual Republican Congressmen, presumably; but not members of the judiciary, polluted by the creeping liberalities of "the culture." What, then, is "the culture"? Something conspiratorial, morally degenerative, irresistibly powerful. Whatever it is, when he sees it, Norman Podhoretz reaches for his gun.

Compared to Mr. Podhoretz's overt peddling of personal fears and hatreds, even Charles Murray's racemongery begins to look rational. Either way, when you dress up the logic of prejudice in the rhetoric of "science," all you get is a Neanderthal in drag. Is there anyone at COMMENTARY who can instruct Mr. Podhoretz in the difference between an argument and a cross-burning?

MATTHEW RUBENSTEIN
Brooklyn, New York

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TO THE EDITOR:

. . . Norman Podhoretz's brief discussion of the ways that homosexuals once lived their lives should have caused him to be a little skeptical about his conclusions. Back then, he writes, homosexuals might "decide to get married and have children, but their true sexual desires would remain focused on men, and it was with men that they would commit adultery if (or more likely when) they did."

Paying "their debt to society," these homosexuals would place themselves in a position that guaranteed deception—how lovely. This, however, is the natural outcome in an environment that preaches to its homosexual members that their homosexual nature is a perversion. . . . The point is not that homosexuality should be accepted because adultery is worse, but that the only alternative offered by opponents of gay rights is a tradition that was morally decadent. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz writes about the "pleasures" and "fascinations" heterosexual men attain when a woman forces them to settle down and have children and thus concludes that "with no women to restrain" them, homosexuals are doomed to "anonymous and loveless encounters" (by which I take it he means a generally miserable life). Of course, because his intention is to condemn by averting understanding, he does not consider that "pleasures" and "fascinations," along with "challenges" and "anxieties" and an an altogether happy and productive life, might be reached differently by homosexual men.

Heterosexual promiscuity is wrong because it hurts others: the man lying to the woman to get her into bed, the man deceiving his wife into believing that she is the only one for him, and (most important) the children being born to homes not suited to care for them. So men, heterosexual men, must be "domesticated," as Mr. Podhoretz writes.

But beyond being "domesticated," marriage to women has a civilizing effect on heterosexual men. It makes them more considerate of the needs of someone quite different from them. It turns them (let us say) from rowdy, drunken, football-watching, lawbreaking, raping beasts into more genteel creatures. It gives them, come to think of it, the qualities that homosexual men have all along possessed. This is where the discussion should begin.

ARTURO FERNANDEZ
Panorama City, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's *angst* over recent gains by gays and lesbians in their struggle against intolerance and discrimination reminded me of the way that, not so very long ago, both the Catholic Church and evangelical Protestants defended maintaining social opprobrium and government persecution against Jews.

In Mr. Podhoretz's polemic were echoes of the old argument that failure to accept Jesus as savior means living in a sinful state. Moreover, those who fail to recognize Jesus can never be truly happy, the way Christians are. *Ergo*, it is in the interest of those trapped in Judaism that they not be given equal treatment, which could be misinterpreted as a sign that their wayward practice is morally equivalent to being a Christian in the eyes of state and society. Worse, unless Jews are continually stigmatized under the law, confused Christians might not realize just how sinful and repugnant the Jewish faith is and might be tempted into that misguided "lifestyle," for which eternal damnation is the only possible outcome. After all, the Bible (New Testament version) tells us so.

STEPHEN H. MILLER
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

. . . While our culture is becoming more accepting of homosexuality, I would hardly call it "approving." At best, less disapproving, perhaps. As we have become more enlightened, thoughtful persons opposed to homosexuality have been left with no rational arguments for denying homosexuals legal equality in our constitutionally based society. . . .

While the Bible may extol heterosexual marriage as the ideal, I do not recall it commenting on tax credits, rights of inheritance, health insurance, or custody rights—some of the legal issues pertinent here. Extending such rights and benefits to same-sex couples will make our society more equitable while not depriving anyone else of rights they already have. . . .

As to where we should go, it seems that Mr. Podhoretz thinks the appropriate direction is backward, to the days when homosexuals were invisible, guilt ridden, and self-hating—in short, perfect targets for persecution and blackmail. . . .

Given the relative infancy of the gay-liberation movement, why be surprised that some gays react to a history of oppression by asserting the superiority of homosexuality? The surprise is that there are still persons who feel the earlier model was more healthy and acceptable.

I look forward to a time when homosexual behavior between consenting adults is viewed simply as a fact of life. It has been present throughout history, and should elicit neither pride nor shame on the personal level, nor legal condemnation in the public arena.

WALTER NAEGLE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I have grown so used over the years to being educated by the lucid mind of Norman Podhoretz on issues related to Communism, the Middle East, and cultural and political trends here at home that it comes as a shock to read his illogical analysis of the growing success of gay Americans in achieving equality in this land which stands for nothing less. . . .

Those like me, a straight, conservative gay-rights activist, are often at a loss to understand how so many conservatives are so quick to abandon our ethos, to say nothing of our most revered constitutional guarantees of the most elemental aspects of individuality, when it comes to private sexual expression or preference. . . .

Though reasoning derived from prejudice cannot be argued against on a rational basis, it must not be allowed to stand unanswered: Mr. Podhoretz finds hypocritical IBM's granting of health coverage to domestic partners of its homosexual employees and not to its heterosexual ones.

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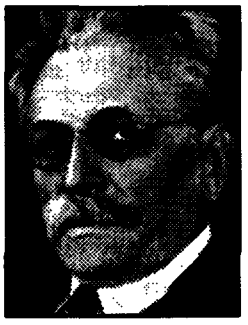

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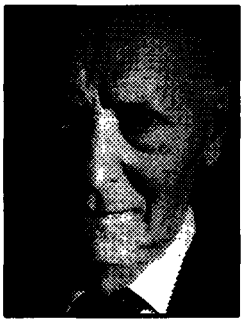

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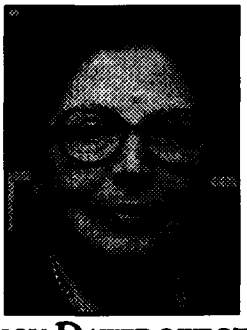

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The perfectly logical answer, given by IBM, is that heterosexuals have the option of marriage.

In the body of the article, Mr. Podhoretz avers, without evidence that would be acceptable in any intellectually sound forum, that gay men are more promiscuous and more "catty" than straight men, and adds that men are more promiscuous than women. . . . He egregiously links pedophilia and homosexuality, and quotes one source, without documentation, avowing that the declining trend of AIDS among gay men over the last few years is reversing, whereas almost all contemporary studies and agencies working in the field report the opposite to be true.

So open is Mr. Podhoretz about the emotional basis of his views that one wants to give him credit, and thanks, for pointing out the positive role corporations are playing in bringing equal treatment to gay Americans as well as the largely ignored fact that we have as many gay people in public life on the conservative side of the ledger as on the liberal side.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I do not dispute what Norman Podhoretz writes about our societal acceptance of homosexuality. What I do not understand is why he cares.

Arguments about male promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS are beside the point; if they were relevant, there would still be no reason to object to lesbianism. And while Mr. Podhoretz writes about the concept of "perversion," he cannot bring himself to rely on the concept of "sin." What seems to be operating is a preference for monoculturalism over multiculturalism. Mr. Podhoretz's objection is not so much to homosexuality *per se* as to its being allowed a presence in mainstream culture.

I have pretty much reached the conclusion that the degree to which one is willing to accept multiculturalism is the key factor today in determining whether one is on the political Left or the political Right and that all else, including economic views, follows from that perspective. . . .

WILLIAM A. BAKER
Bloomfield, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's contributions to the pages of COMMENTARY are always welcome, but his last two pieces have left me confused. In his October 1996 essay, "Liberalism and the Culture: A Turning of the Tide?," cultural liberalism was depicted as a waning force, "no longer quite so powerful as it was even a few short years ago." By November, however, Mr. Podhoretz's analysis of "How the Gay-Rights Movement Won" summoned up the image of a beleaguered Churchillian figure, resolving to fight on the landing grounds and on the beaches and in the streets, in a losing, indeed lost, battle against the leading edge of cultural liberalism.

While I would be honored to shoulder arms beside Mr. Podhoretz in that struggle, however doomed, I confess to being unaware of anything that happened between October and November to turn incipient victory into headlong rout. What did I miss?

HENRY D. FETTER
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Except for the eloquent personal statement at the conclusion of his essay, Norman Podhoretz offers an otherwise objective analysis of the not-so-gradual change in American attitudes and approaches toward homosexuality. I am disappointed, however, that he makes no reference (even for the purpose of rejection) to the argument that a validation of homosexuality was almost inevitable given the more general changes in sexual practice and opinion among Americans over the past three or four decades.

Most Americans today, even many conservatives and conservative Christian Americans, by their easy acceptance of a contraceptive mentality, . . . have separated sex from procreation. Or, to be more accurate, they have removed procreation from its place of primacy. If, then, pleasure, or affection, or intimacy, or companionship, or "love" can in our culture replace cooperation with God in the creation of new life (that is, babies) as the principal purpose of human sex, how is homosexual sex that much different from the heterosexual contraceptive sex now routinely accepted by Americans? . . .

THOMAS B. SWANZEY
Mahwah, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

I appreciate your publishing "How the Gay-Rights Movement Won." I have only one qualification. I think Norman Podhoretz understates the perversion issue, . . . but he is on firmer ground in emphasizing, the promiscuity inherent in male homosexuality.

I live near a city as tolerant of the gay "life-style" as it is possible for a city to be. Such tolerance and openness, however, have not dampened the promiscuity nor pushed the perverse elements to the margins. Rather the opposite. Neither tolerance nor disease nor death avails in this regard, as Mr. Podhoretz aptly notes at the end of his essay. The unnatural drives out the natural, protestations to the contrary notwithstanding.

WILLIAM E. JOHNSTON, JR.
Point Richmond, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz raises the issue of a biological source of homosexuality and even states: "Nor do I doubt that a biological or genetic factor is at work here."

I respectfully refer Mr. Podhoretz to "Gay Genes, Revisited," *Scientific American*, November 1995, which examines two studies from the early 90's that purported to show that male homosexuality has biological underpinnings.

The author of one of the studies, *Scientific American* reports, "has been charged with research improprieties and is now under investigation by the Federal Office of Research Integrity." As for the other study, no one has been able to duplicate the researcher's findings.

The *Scientific American* article concludes:

> [A] neurobiologist at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego notes that the search for the biological underpinnings of complex human traits has a sorry

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history of late. In recent years, researchers and the media have proclaimed the "discovery" of genes linked to alcoholism and mental illness as well as to homosexuality. None of the claims, [he] points out, have been confirmed.

At the time, those reports received headlines worldwide, yet I do not recall any headlines reporting this more recent information. . . .

DAVID H. FAX
Canton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to express my appreciation for Norman Podhoretz's courageous essay. I am a retired clinical (psychiatric) social worker and psychotherapist, a conservative, a long-time subscriber to COMMENTARY, and one of those holdouts in my benighted profession who insist that homosexuality is a psychological disorder. I would emphasize homosexuals' narcissistic personality traits, in tandem with neurotic symptoms.

Of particular importance is Mr. Podhoretz's analysis of the gay-rights pitch that homosexuality is biologically inborn, an involuntary condition that is "beyond the reach of moral judgment." He notes that ". . . the same logic would confer moral legitimation on pedophiles, who also could and did claim that they were made that way and were therefore unable to help themselves."

This aspect of the controversy is not peripheral. The virtual silence about male (homosexual) pedophilia and pederasty maintained by mental-health and social-work practitioners for, lo, these many years, is scandalous. . . .

If I might be forgiven the self-indulgence of extensively quoting myself, the following are excerpts from my five-year-old essay on "The Politics of Child Abuse" (*Society*, September/October 1991):

> There has been considerable equivocation throughout the mental-health professions [including clinical social work] on . . . male (homosexual) pedophilia and pederasty. . . . After the initial massive denial from establishment figures, the Covenant House/Father Bruce Ritter scandal compelled serious attention. . . . In July 1990, a Covenant House internal investigation confirmed that Father Ritter had been involved in sexual misconduct with teenage boys at his shelter for over twenty years. It also revealed that senior staff members were aware of this, and that Father Ritter's superiors at the Franciscan Order received reports from them on these affairs. . . .
>
> In my article I also expanded on how this case graphically illustrated the political and ideological influences on mental-health and social services in this country:
>
> To a significant extent, a cover was provided for Father Ritter and his accomplices by widespread liberal tolerance of and rationalization for homosexual pedophilia and pederasty. "Homophobia" has incessantly and unfavorably been contrasted with tolerance of "alternative life-styles." . . . Interestingly, this deference is not extended to . . . heterosexual pedophilia, or other heterosexual manifestations of the exploitation of children. . . .
>
> I also noted that among gay-rights militants, ideological rationalizations for child sexual exploitation often take rather bizarre forms:
>
> Many gay men acknowledge that they have initiated encounters [with young boys]. They argue that these types of relationships offer young boys the only real possibility for healthy acculturation into homosexuality. . . . [T]hese attitudes, so pronounced and accepted in [gay] culture, . . . allowed a Covenant House/Father Bruce Ritter case to develop and operate for twenty years.

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[This] benign presentation of male (homosexual) pedophilia is not supported by any clinical or research evidence. Outsiders usually do not learn of specifics about caressing and fondling of young boys by gay pedophiles. The subject of homosexual fellatio with children is rarely [if ever] discussed. Pederasts and their anal dispositions are also not discussed, despite the AIDS epidemic. (It is acceptable for Robert Mapplethorpe to present photographs of nude children in suggestive poses, along with adult males engaged in sadomasochistic practices. Such a display has been adopted as a civil-liberties [and cultural] *cause célèbre*.)...

I despair of a liberal culture in which such pathological behavior, such physical and psychological traumas can be inflicted on children and adolescents, and rationalized in the name of gay rights. If my sense of moral, ethical, and professional repugnance is branded "homophobic" by the mob (and "diagnosed" as such by witch-hunting psychiatrists and other lemmings), then, now that I am retired, I can wear that badge proudly.

Congratulations to Norman Podhoretz on an inspiriting piece of work. He should keep in mind that there are mental-health and social-work professionals receptive to his analysis, perhaps more than he thinks. . . . But they are quiescent by necessity, not having the security of being able to change jobs—or retire. I know. I was there.

PAUL WALLER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

. . . In 1935, Sigmund Freud wrote these words to a distraught American mother:

> I gather from your letter that your son is a homosexual. I am impressed by the fact that you do not mention this term in your information about him. May I question you, why you avoid it? Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of development. . . .

Today, . . . homosexual candidates in American psychoanalytic institutes are affronted by phrases like the ones Freud used, which they consider pathologizing. . . . They would undoubtedly choke on Freud's notion that homosexuality, though nothing to be ashamed of, is also no advantage. . . .

At meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association, psychoanalysts now bustle to form committees and create workshops to investigate alleged bias and discrimination against homosexual candidates. The fact is that fully a third of America's psychoanalytic institutes have "at least one openly gay or lesbian candidate," . . . but the feeling among certain vociferous members of the Psychoanalytic Association is that statistics would dictate a much larger number, even though the most recent estimate of homosexuality in the general population is 1 percent. . . .

The word homosexual has now become the "h" word, too dangerous even for psychoanalysts. Homophobia has joined racist and sexist as a label with such power that before it we must all give way, no matter the intellectual and scientific cost. It seems that it is no longer important whether something is true, only whether it appears fair to the designated minority. . . .

If psychoanalysts believe in the concepts they have written so much about—pathological narcissism, developmental arrest, normal heterosexual development—why are they so ready to turn their backs on those ideas? The analysts who are willing to consider trashing the tenets of their science cannot really be the intellectual descendants of the same Dr. Freud quoted above. . . .

Let us be as bold as Freud was over 60 years ago. Science has shown that the homosexual population is rife with promiscuity, rife with AIDS. This does not call for a witch-hunt, but it does raise certain questions about the intrinsic health of a practice that wants to perceive itself as normal. Normal? In the absence of high-tech manipulation, homosexuality is an evolutionary dead end. One might conclude, then, that homosexuality, if it is indeed a genetic rather than a psychological phenomenon, is an evolutionary error. It is not . . . an alternative but equally valid foundation for family life. Individual homosexuals may contribute much to art, music, literature, engineering, medicine, politics, but homosexuality is, at best, biologically maladaptive. . . .

JO ANNE M. RANDALL
Shaker Heights, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

Congratulations and thanks to Norman Podhoretz for publishing a superb analysis of the social and political pressures that have led to the widespread acceptance of the beliefs and claims of gay-activist propaganda. He has summarized with remarkable precision most of the crucial factors. Particularly anguishing to the more mature and sober clinicians who would entirely agree with his closing comments is his accurate judgment that the major psychiatric and psychological associations have simply capitulated to the gay-rights movement. . . .

As Mr. Podhoretz briefly notes, and as careful researchers have shown, the claims of a genetic basis for homosexuality—though trumpeted with great noise—are flimsy and feeble. They are based on very small samples, the results are contradictory, and in at least one well-known case, the lead researcher on the study has been accused of fraud.

The idea that homosexuality is irreversible has also been shown to be a flagrant untruth; there are a considerable number of studies and reports demonstrating unequivocal success in helping previously identified homosexuals become comfortably heterosexual. . . .

In regard to "health," no responsible researcher disputes the annihilation caused by AIDS, or its very high correlation in North America with male homosexual practice. Neither is the high correlation with a number of other unpleasant diseases disputed. But what is most devastating is the very much reduced life expectancy for both male and female homosexuals who do *not* have AIDS. . . .

I would also like to discuss the Jewish aspect of the

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problem. Jewish tradition is quite unequivocal in rejecting the practice of homosexuality, while being open to and accepting of the person (as it is of any Jew). There have been many attempts in recent years to distort this position, but they have zero foundation. . . . In the latest (fourth) volume of . . . the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Medical Ethics* (in Hebrew), there is a very knowledgeable, fair, up-to-date review of homosexuality which concludes that *whatever* its etiology may eventually prove to be—genetic, chemical, hormonal, or psychological—Jewish tradition requires self-control in abstaining from its practice. . . .

JOSEPH BERGER, M.D.
Downsview, Ontario
Canada

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz is to be congratulated for courage in writing his wise and compassionate article on the gay-rights movement.

The extraordinary change in attitudes to homosexual behavior over the last two decades is not fully explained by the activities of the gay-rights movement, and the politics of the psychiatric profession. Another important factor is surely the marked decline in influence of the churches that began after World War II and accelerated in the last decades. Now that the Bible is no longer taught in schools, and the churches influence few outside their own committed members, . . . society at large feels no loyalty to the biblical condemnation of homosexual behavior. . . .

For most of the last two millennia, the ethics of the Torah have been, partly at least, mediated to the Western world by the church. This is no longer the case. We must learn to see this change as a massive cultural shift, of which the question of homosexuality is only a part. . . . Traditional Jews and Christians will have to . . . recognize that they now constitute a distinct group within a society with which full integration may no longer be possible or even desirable. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz is generous in his concession to homosexual apologists on biological factors, perhaps too generous, since there is still no conclusive scientific evidence for genetic or biological factors predetermining a homosexual orientation. Indeed, there are *a-priori* reasons to doubt it on evolutionary grounds, since such a gene could have no survival value.

There is, however, a considerable body of evidence from the psychoanalytic and post-psychoanalytic branches of psychiatry to support the view that this orientation is conditioned by emotional factors and sometimes physical abuse in early childhood, and that it is in principle and often in practice reversible. But psychiatrists who hold these views are being virtually silenced by the intense hostility to their position that prevails among gays and their supporters in the profession. Unfortunately, in the present cultural scene their ideas also receive little notice among the educated public at large, and the case for genetic or biological causation is going by default, as even Mr. Podhoretz's article indicates. . . .

WILLIAM NICHOLLS
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's elegiac article is both a brilliant summation of recent cultural history and an admirable exercise in intellectual independence and moral courage. The well-nigh total victory, within the universities and among the chattering classes, of the gay movement combines with the sympathy all must feel

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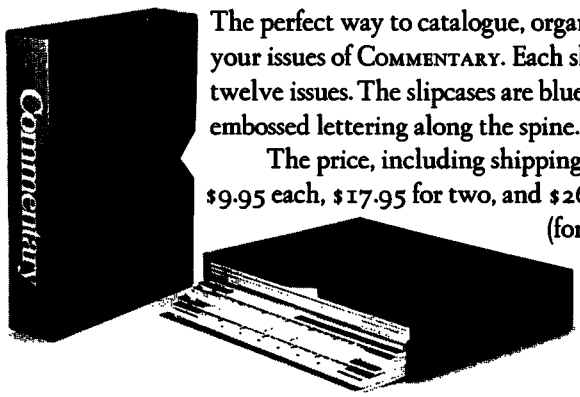

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Commentary

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for gay friends to make it extraordinarily difficult to speak what many heterosexuals (and some gays) still believe to be the truth: that the man who is sexually attracted only to those of his own sex suffers from an unfortunate, though far from devastating, condition for which he deserves pity.

Whatever genetic, hormonal, or other biological factors may contribute to this developmental failure, it remains likely that the social environment also plays a crucial role in many, if not all, cases. That gays today, full of hubris at the success Mr. Podhoretz describes, can spare no sympathy for "wavering" children is understandable. Having persuaded themselves that gay and straight are co-equal, it would be quite inconsistent to deplore the fact that some young people will move into the gay life when they might happily live straight. It is astonishing, however, that heterosexuals—few of whom actually believe one orientation is as good as another—contentedly accept changes in society that are likely to have that result.

We remain extraordinarily ignorant about the genesis of sexual orientation. Those who pretend to know that free will plays little or no role in the matter are fooling themselves and trying, perhaps innocently, to fool the rest of us. In circumstances where there is even a suspicion that something might harm children (e.g., while the effects of smoking remained uncertain) loving parents act to protect them. Yet on this issue that is central to a person's life, we allow ourselves to be persuaded, in the total absence of hard evidence, simply by a masterful, unremitting propaganda campaign. We do so through a wish to temper the suffering of gay friends. A saving grace, perhaps (though not for the youth who is misled), is that the lack of a base line from which to measure may spare us even knowing how many are condemned, through our generosity, to living gay when they might have lived straight.

E. L. PATTULLO
Center for the Behavioral Sciences
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

I want to commend COMMENTARY for its courage in publishing Norman Podhoretz's brave and honest article. What he has to say, especially in his closing paragraphs, needs to be said—and needs to be heard: that even if the AIDS plague were to abate and homosexual marriage were legalized in the 50 states and ratified by all nine Justices of the Supreme Court, it would not matter because gay sex itself would still be a perversion. Whether we call it truth or natural law or "the obvious," as does George Orwell, or "the fundamental realities of life," as does Mr. Podhoretz, makes little difference.

It requires a brave and probing unreconstructed mind, a mind undistorted by the wish-fulfillment of ideological propaganda, to remind reasonable men and women of the nature of homosexual activity and to make clear what are still, and will always be, the grave dangers and risks of claiming otherwise. Take the recent issue of *Newsweek* on the cover of which appears two women and the caption, "We're Having a Baby." To say anything but "Oh no, you're not!" is to perpetuate the worst kind of mendacity and illusion, itself couched in the worst sentimentality about the nature and responsibilities of love and sexuality. But such relativist egalitarian sentimentality is all too often shared by the middle classes and advocates for the sexual revolution: love (even more than death) is the Great Leveler.

Having said this much, I would like to challenge one statement in the article, that "no homosexual today would be caught dead agreeing that homosexuality is a perversion, or even an illness." I am such a homosexual who would unhesitatingly agree with Mr. Podhoretz's judgment of homosexuality, and I hope I am very much alive. Nor am I alone among homosexuals in understanding and accepting homosexuality to be a deviance, although I know that I go against many fellow conservatives who increasingly claim their desire and their behavior to be normal, natural, or God-given. As much as I might otherwise admire political positions taken by Andrew Sullivan or the literary criticism of Bruce Bawer, I can only think them wrong in their views on homosexuality, and can only see their arguments as disingenuous, clever, and ultimately self-deceiving.

My own view is, of course, ridiculed as an instance of regressive self-loathing or dismissed as merely homophobic, but having observed the wildly irresponsible sexual attitudes and behavior of many gays over the years as well as the gay movement's moral and political hypocrisies since the late 1960's, I cannot believe I have a monopoly in these psychological debilities. . . .

There is but one instance I am aware of when homosexuality approaches the normal and natural: that is when the experience of Eros is God-given and the person so affected responds morally, that is, chastely. Such a conception, I am fully aware, may sound strange to most people, to gays as much as to straights, but it is an ancient one first and best elucidated by Plato in his *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. With the utmost self-control, with the cultivating of virtue and the love of wisdom, it is possible for two men, as the Greek philosopher explains, to become pregnant and conceive truly *spiritual* children.

The personal result of such an intense and chastely intimate passion is friendship between the two men involved—whether it be called ideal, heroic, romantic, perfect, or spiritual friendship—as well as friendship with God. But the historical result of such erotic experience is equally dramatic (though seldom recognized for what it is) and, being more evident, has brought lasting benefit and inspiration to many generations, starting with Plato's own dialogues and including the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the covenant between David and Jonathan, St. Aelred of Rievaulx's treatise on *Spiritual Friendship*, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. . . .

These are only a few of the many contributions that could be pointed to, including realms other than the literary or philosophical, but they serve to indi-

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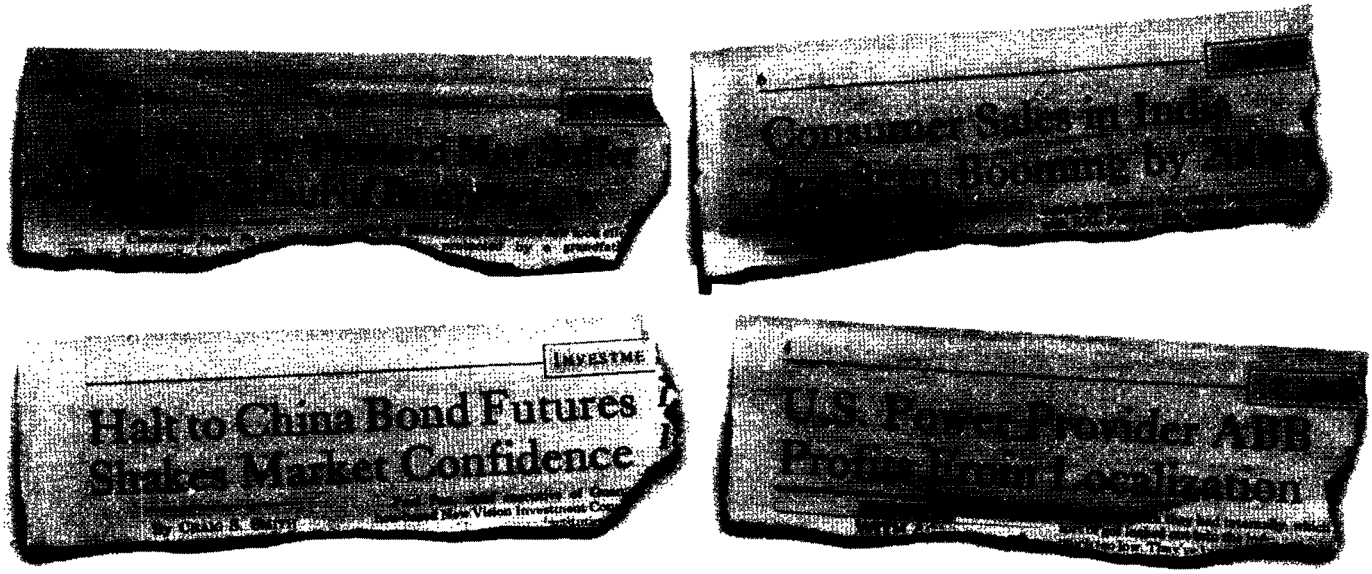

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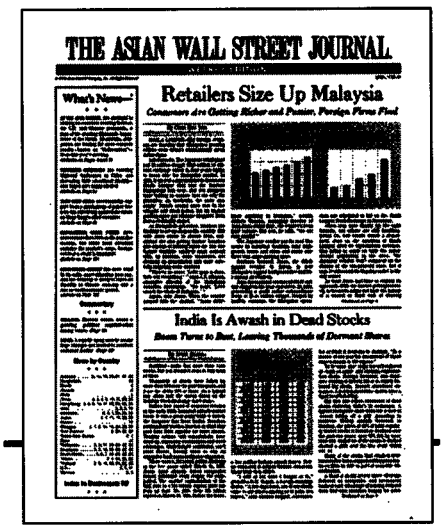

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cate the powerful and enduring influence of works that originate from a transcendent source—which, rightly reverenced, and the forces it unleashes being virtuously disciplined—yields other, more lasting fruit than we have become used to since the gay revolution made its first devastating inroads into our cultural and political life. . . . Moral and cultural conservatives especially should be able to claim Plato's philosophical contribution to this debate as much as they do the religious contributions of Judaism and Christianity.

I would also agree with what Mr. Podhoretz states earlier in his article, that no matter whether science irrefutably proves the existence of a gay gene, it does not argue for normalcy, nor does it absolve the carrier of ethical responsibility. And I would like to add to his closing words that no matter how many people come to change their minds about the nature of homosexuality and deem it to be natural, its sexual expression will still be unnatural by every design and purpose of nature.

Only by transcending nature and transforming physical desire into something moral and spiritual can homosexuality participate in God's design and purpose. If our society were not so comfortable and geared toward immediate self-gratification, that "only" would be a challenge and incitement to greater self-knowledge.

PAUL EDWARD GUAY
Allston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's article on the triumph of the gay-rights movement is right on the mark. In recent years the media have adopted the movement's line that any criticism of homosexuality or of the gay-rights agenda is a sign of homophobia. As he points out, the tables have been turned: being a homosexual is now simply an "orientation," whereas criticizing any aspect of homosexual culture is a symptom of a deep neurosis.

The signs of the movement's triumph are everywhere. In the *Washington Post* I read recently that the president of the Old Town Civic Association in Alexandria, Virginia, thinks that supporting gay marriage could help Alexandria's image in the business community and draw more high-technology companies and trade associations to the city. I also read that soon there will be a compact disc of gay classical-music composers that includes self-acknowledged homosexuals as well as "maybes" like Schubert, Chopin, and Handel. The gay-rights movement is intent on expanding the number of gay composers, writers, and artists because it continually implies that gays are not only "normal," they are also more likely to be artistic than straight people.

It is too soon to say what effect the normalization of gay culture will have on American culture in general, but one thing is clear: because the business world has discovered that gays have a great deal of disposable income, there will be a growing number of products pitched to the gay community and a growing reluctance to question the gay-rights agenda. As it stands now, it is taken for granted in the major media that anyone who questions this agenda is a mean-spirited, unenlightened gay basher.

STEPHEN MILLER
Reston, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's brilliant and courageous "How the Gay-Rights Movement Won" reminded me of Albert Schweitzer's words to a friend: "I feel like someone who, in a perverted generation, remains loyal to the truth."

His narrative of the gay-rights campaign, which has completely overwhelmed our culture, intimidating virtually everyone with the "homophobia" billy-club, . . . omitted an important phrase. Doesn't Mr. Podhoretz recall those years when the movement had integrity and its members considered themselves free human beings who were responsible for their behavior? The term they were using in the early days after Stonewall (1969) was "homosexual preference," remember? (This was later replaced by "homosexual orientation.") They then decided to renounce freedom and responsibility, as a shrewd political tactic for gaining public sympathy. So they embraced biological fatalism. "We can't help ourselves. We're born this way." . . .

HAROLD KULUNGIAN
Amherst, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Even God would agree with Norman Podhoretz, for did He not say, "It is not

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good for man to be alone"? And when He finally created a suitable mate for man, was it not a "she"? . . . The question arises, why is it not good for man to be alone? I reached the same conclusion Mr. Podhoretz did through my best and wisest friend, the Bible. The solution to the problem of man being alone was to create a helper to face him. And that is what man needs in order to be elevated from the animal kingdom. Man needs a woman to face him, to set limits on him, to challenge him, and to remind him where he came from and why he is here. . . .

What is happening with the gay community is absolutely outrageous. I would have expected by now that someone from the gay community would have come out with a statement to the effect that . . . it is time to assume responsibility for the AIDS epidemic and put an end to it. No such statement. The gay community is holding us hostage and we are holding ourselves hostage in the name of understanding, progressive thinking, and the like. . . .

RACHEL NEUMAN
Miami Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's "How the Gay-Rights Movement Won" resonates with clarity; he defines crucial terms, selects specific issues, and, supported by cogent examples, tells us where he stands. . . .

DOUGLAS H. SCHEWE
Madison, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR:

Bravo to Norman Podhoretz. I shudder to think of the vilification that will come his way. But for him, or anyone, to write as he did on this subject displays a species of guts that I had supposed was long gone from American intellectual life.

HERB GREER
Manchester, England

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz has written a brave and important article. Brave because Mr. Podhoretz has written with (typical) brio, clarity, and insight on a topic which modern liberal sensibilities have demanded that we treat otherwise. Important because Mr. Podhoretz makes the argument that opponents of the gay-rights agenda are sometimes reluctant to make; namely, stating that their opposition is based not simply on utilitarian reasons but on intrinsic ones, such as (in Mr. Podhoretz's words) "the fundamental realities of life," the nature of men and women, the sacredness of the sexual act, and religious and moral considerations.

Let us be clear: the human carnage which has visited the homosexual community is an awful one. And the personal struggles that many homosexuals endure are often poignant. Christians (of whom I am one) have an obligation to treat people with basic dignity and decency. But we also have an obligation to speak out on behalf of moral standards and right conduct. And in response to the advancing gay-rights agenda (same-sex marriage and all that), I think the response must be: it is wrong, and so it ought to be resisted.

This is not an easy thing to say these days. But say it we must. And say it Norman Podhoretz has. For that he deserves our thanks.

PETER H. WEHNER
McLean, Virginia

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Andrew Sullivan finds me "vile," "ugly," and full of "bile." To my old friend W. Scott Thompson, I am driven by "fear, blinding anger, and hatred." To Franklin E. Kameny, I am a "two-bit little homophobic bigot." To Matthew Rubenstein, I am a "Neanderthal in drag" who cannot tell "the difference between an argument and a cross-burning." To Yaakov Levado, I "play the game of anti-Semites," while George Jochnowitz reminds me that Jews repent on Yom Kippur of "the sin of causeless hatred." Then, having put on this little demonstration of what lies in wait for anyone who opposes the gay-rights movement, its proponents go on to claim that it won because it has better *arguments*.

Now to a few specifics:

I humbly beg Andrew Sullivan's pardon for not following every twist and turn in his thinking. Like many other readers of his book *Virtually Normal*, I interpreted the sentence in question as applying to gay marriage, and I fear that I missed his subsequent clarifications. Such are the dangers of not being a regular reader of the *Washington Post* and the disadvantages of lacking the variorum edition of *Virtually Normal* that will no doubt be available to scholars in the utopian future it will have helped to bring into being. Nevertheless, my point remains valid. For the very fact that even in the age of AIDS Mr. Sullivan approves of "extramarital outlets" in premarital gay male relationships confirms the truth of the remark by Mark Steyn I quot-

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ed in my article: "a grisly plague has not furthered the cause of homosexual monogamy, so why should a permit from the town clerk?" Nor is it clear why Mr. Sullivan, or any other homosexual who believes in fidelity, should not be able to practice it without a marriage license. Moreover, given Mr. Sullivan's own endorsement of "extramarital outlets," I fail to see why it was "vile" of me to assume that he had contracted the AIDS virus as a result of promiscuity. And even though he became HIV-positive as a result of "merely one encounter," he, like many other homosexuals, was indeed "willing to court death" (in this case by playing sexual Russian roulette) rather than remain monogamous.

Daniel Mendelsohn does not exactly accuse me of misrepresenting him, but I accuse him of misrepresenting me. If he had actually read my article, he would have noticed that in mentioning Bruce Bawer's anthology, *Beyond Queer*, I said its "purpose [was] to challenge the 'Gay Left Orthodoxy' represented by the term queer."

Mr. Mendelsohn, like Rabbi Levado, Marvin Liebman, and Stephen H. Miller (not to be confused with Stephen Miller, who is on the other side), also compares homosexuals to Jews. This comparison, which is in general much favored not only by Jewish homosexuals but also by propagandists appealing for Jewish support, always reminds me of the analogy Sholem Aleichem draws between a man and a shoemaker: "Wherein does a man resemble a shoemaker? A shoemaker lives and lives until he dies, and so does a man." It is true that Jews and homosexuals are both members of minority groups who have suffered persecution and discrimination, and that similar arguments have sometimes been invoked to justify such treatment. But all this is also true of pedophiles. Would Rabbi Levado, Marvin Liebman, and Mr. Miller place them under the same protective Jewish umbrella they now hold over homosexuals?

W. Scott Thompson's letter is so incoherent that even after reading it three times I still cannot figure out what the sad story it tells is supposed to convey. But to the question of whether what Mr. Thompson does in bed is any of my business, I can only reply that the gay-rights movement has made the sexual practices of its constituents everyone's business. Indeed, thanks to the more evangelical members of that movement, even elementary-school children have been forced to learn about anal intercourse and other "joys of gay sex" (the phrase, I would remind Mr. Thompson, is not mine but is taken from the title of a manual by Edmund White, and in the age of AIDS unavoidably lends itself to mockery). It is also everyone's business to decide what is normal and what is perverse; and as an intellectual, I consider it my special business to confront the kind of radical challenge that the gay-rights movement has mounted to my own intransigently traditional sense of the nature of human reality.

Unlike Mr. Thompson and others, Franklin E. Kameny agrees that homosexuality is a perversion, but so far as he is concerned, that is an argument in its favor. "Let us," he cheerfully proposes, "have more and better enjoyment of more and better sexual perversions (consensually engaged in) by more and more people." I do not share his view that we would "all be the better off for it," and somehow I doubt that Thomas Jefferson had sodomy in mind when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. But I appreciate Mr. Kameny's willingness to call a spade a spade, which is precisely the main thing I was trying to do in my article. It may also surprise him to hear that I oppose discrimination against homosexuals in the workplace (except for the military,which is a special case). But even if fighting job discrimination was the driving force behind the gay-rights movement at the beginning, today its animating purpose is to interdict the idea of homosexuality as a perversion and to establish it as no less normal and healthy an "orientation" than heterosexuality.

It is to this idea that I refuse my assent in spite of the fact that psychiatrists like Richard C. Friedman have given it an allegedly scientific imprimatur. Dr. Friedman admits that political pressure was brought to bear on the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders, but he assures us that the change was made on the basis of scientific considerations. The empirical data, he contends, reveal that homosexuals experience no special disability, while the only special distress they feel results from their "being victims of social prejudice." Really? To quote again from the *New York Times* report I cited in my article, thanks to the return of promiscuity among homosexuals, "more than half of the nation's twenty-year-old gay men will contract HIV during their lifetime" if present trends continue. Do Dr. Friedman and his colleagues seriously believe that suicidal behavior on this scale is normal, or that it can be attributed to social prejudice rather than to a mental disorder?

Having already registered my low opinion of the parallel Rabbi Levado draws between Jews and homosexuals, here I need only ask why, if gay liberation is the "way to work against perversity and disease," these problems have grown rather than diminished with the increasing legitimation of homosexuality. I also want to express my astonishment at seeing an Orthodox rabbi declare, in brazen contravention of what the Torah teaches, that "Nature is a text that can say almost anything we want it to say." But then again, Rabbi Levado (whose name if taken as a Hebrew word means "by himself alone," which I sincerely hope he is within the Orthodox rabbinate) seems to specialize in brazen contraventions of the teachings of the Torah.

George Jochnowitz does my own fidelity to the teachings of the Torah too much credit in assuming that I rely on the authority of Leviticus for my belief that it is a perversion for men to use one another as women. To repeat: the reason I believe this is that it seems to me, as not so long ago it did to almost everyone, including most homosexuals, self-evident—a kind of axiom of natural law. But I thank Mr. Jochnowitz for

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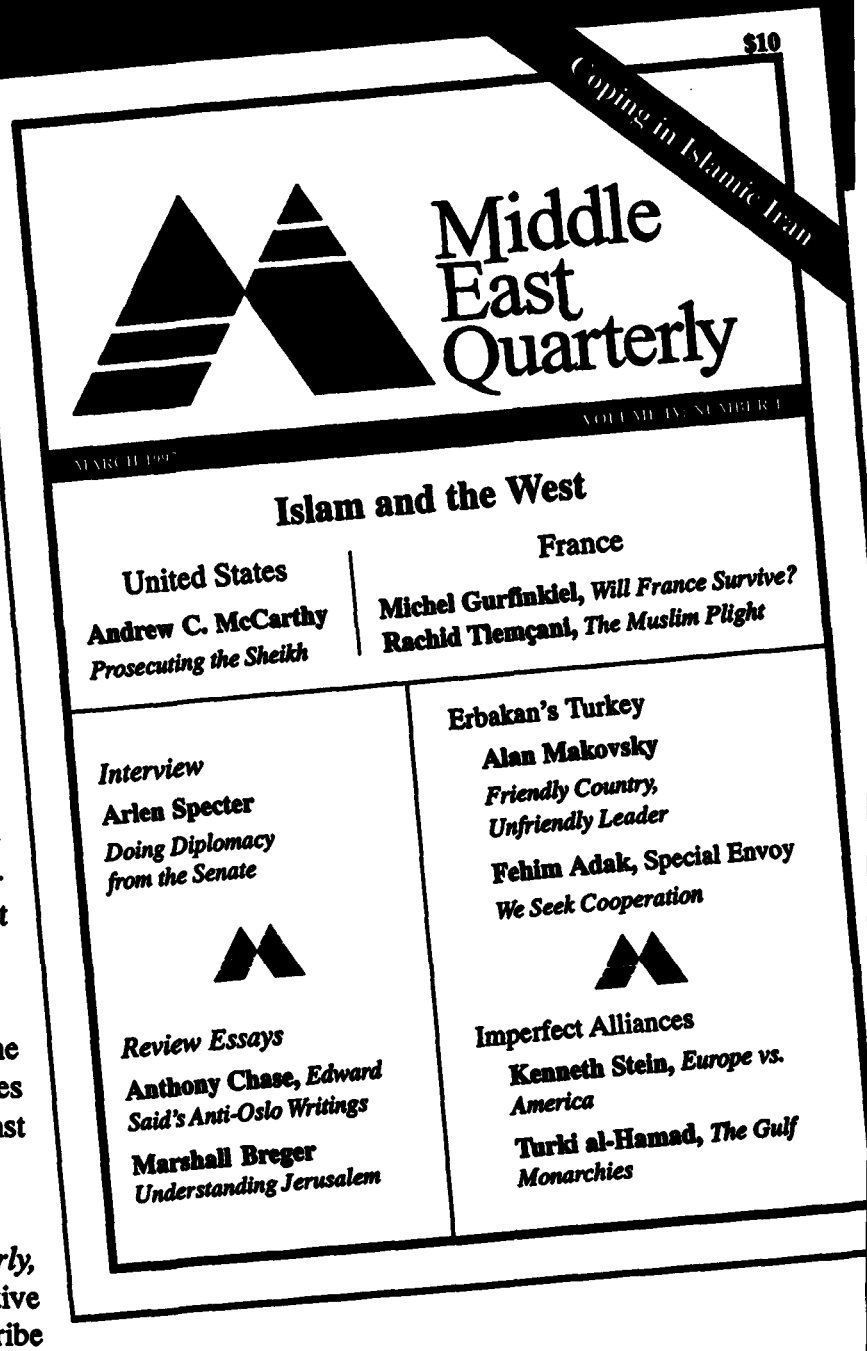

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absolving me of the sin of hatred. I do not hate homosexuals; what I hate (as William A. Baker perceives) is the idea that homosexuality is as normal and healthy as heterosexuality.

As a well-known conservative activist who came out of the closet some years ago, Marvin Liebman is understandably more concerned with the strictly political aspects of the debate over homosexuality than are many other conservatives (including myself). For me, to repeat it yet again, the main issue has to do not with electoral strategies but our "sense of the fundamental realities of life," and "the terrible distortions that have been introduced into the general understanding of those realities by the gay-rights movement and its supporters." Although it is true that—for reasons which are surely too obvious to need spelling out—I refer very often to AIDS in my article, I also declare explicitly "that even if gay sex no longer entailed the danger of infection," it would still constitute a perversion.

I agree with Robert W. Wilson about the economic clout of homosexuals (though even on a point like this, I would apply the Sholem Aleichem rule to the comparison with Jews). I also think that he is probably right in speculating that homosexuality is rooted in "an inability to have the kind of intimate relationship that women quite reasonably expect and demand." I myself have long suspected that homosexuality derives less from a positive attraction to men than from a fear of women—and especially of the messy entanglements that inevitably follow from getting mixed up with them. But I doubt that in the age of AIDS it is "better for a man to have sex with a man than with nobody" (Mr. Wilson is a little too confident that "it can be done safely").

Doyne Dawson is right about my concern for "waverers," but he is dead wrong in suggesting that they do not exist outside the pages of COMMENTARY. I have known a number of them myself, and there is plenty of testimony available from men who regret having been lured or seduced into homosexuality when they were young and still uncertain about their sexual proclivities.

If Matthew Rubenstein wants to know what I mean by the "polity" and the "culture," he can easily find out by reading my article.

Contrary to what Arturo Fernandez imagines, I was not recommending a return to the time when homosexuals married women and then committed adultery with men; I was merely describing how things once were. But Mr. Fernandez is entirely correct about my bleak view of the life men lead without women to domesticate them. As for his (dare I call it campy?) claim that men who are civilized by women end up with "the qualities that homosexual men have all along possessed," I will concede that it at least has the merit of originality.

Walter Naegle would like homosexuality to be "viewed simply as a fact of life." Well, it certainly is a fact of life, but precisely because it raises questions about the fundamental realities of human existence, I doubt that it will ever be seen "simply" as that, least of all by homosexuals themselves.

I regret having disappointed Frederic Wile, who has always been very kind about my work, but I am bewildered by his denial that men are more promiscuous than women and that homosexual men are the most promiscuous of all. I am equally puzzled by his refusal to accept the evidence I cited of the return of promiscuity among homosexuals (and about which William E. Johnston, Jr., reporting from the San Francisco front lines, provides additional testimony).

I can (I hope) resolve the contradiction Henry D. Fetter finds between "Liberalism and the Culture: A Turning of the Tide?" and "How the Gay-Rights Movement Won" by pointing out that the two articles were looking at two different parts of the forest.

Thomas B. Swanzey makes an interesting observation about the way in which the legitimation of homosexuality has been helped along by the general separation of sex from procreation. But can he seriously mean it when he jumps to the conclusion that homosexual sex is not "that much different from the heterosexual contraceptive sex now routinely accepted by Americans"?

David H. Fax reads more into the sentence he quotes about the biological basis of homosexuality than I intended to put there. I was referring to the small percentage of homosexuals "who are so driven by lust for other men, and so erotically repelled by women, that for all practical purposes the only choice they have is between homosexuality and chastity." (On such men, the extraordinary letter from Paul Edgar Guay casts a most unusual light.) But on the question of a gay gene, I am inclined to side with Mr. Fax (and with William Nicholls).

Paul Waller raises a difficult and delicate issue that I confess I deliberately avoided, largely because the silence of which he speaks has deprived us of any solid evidence concerning the extent of pedophilia among homosexuals. We are often told that most pedophiles are heterosexual, which must certainly be true in terms of absolute numbers, since heterosexuals make up about 97 percent of the population. But is it also true in terms of relative percentages? I agree with Mr. Waller that we will never find out so long as homosexual pedophilia remains the beneficiary of a tolerance that is not (at least not yet!) extended as widely or as readily to the molestation of girls by men.

In the meantime I commend Mr. Waller's letter, as well as Jo Anne M. Randall's and Joseph Berger's, to Dr. Friedman. I also want to thank them—along with E.L. Pattullo, Stephen Miller, Harold Kulungian, Rachel Neuman, Douglas H. Schewe, Herb Greer, and Peter H. Wehner—for their generous words and their many illuminating comments.

Unpleasant Mr. Eliot

TO THE EDITOR:

John Gross's analysis of T.S. Eliot's anti-Semitism ["Was T.S. Eliot a Scoundrel?," November 1996] is perceptive, engaging, and fair. I would add for consideration a passage from Percival Christopher Wren's

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fondly remembered novel of the French Foreign Legion, *Beau Geste*.

I am thinking of the scene in . . . a pawnbroker's shop in Paris where John (the brother, played by Ray Milland in the movie) finds "a young gentleman, of markedly Hebraic appearance, behind the counter."

John is not encouraged:

> I expected to hear him say: Vat d'ye vant Mithter? and waggle his hands, palms upwards, near his shoulders, as I remembered a song, last heard at Oxford, anent one Solomon Levi and his store at Chatham Street.

John approaches cautiously, taking note of the pawnbroker's appearance:

> As his bold brown eyes regarded me, his curved nostril curved a little more, and his large ripe lips, beneath the pendulous nose, ripened while I watched.

. . . They discuss price. John tries to approach the question with a sense of fair play, but the "Child of Israel" (Wren uses that term for the pawnbroker from this point on) repeatedly responds with "Ow much?" Reason, compassion, justice are not the issues for him, just "Ow much?" "'Ow much?' said the child of the Children of Israel.". . .

Well, what are we to make of this? Is there any way to view the phenomenon as something relatively benign? I think there is. What must not be forgotten is that Eliot and Wren do not present this material in some kind of code language, or with any sense of shame. They seem to think it all quite "respectable." That tells us something.

We must ask ourselves some questions. Can anyone, for example, imagine Eliot and Wren applauding storm troopers rounding up Jews for the concentration camps? Or cheering on Nazi bully boys hounding Jewish children on the way to synagogue? However disappointed and angered one may be by these passages in their writing, it would be a stretch to hold that they would do such things. Their "anti-Semitism" is in a category of a different sort.

Mr. Gross understands this, but—it seems to me—not sufficiently thoroughly. He notes Eliot's concern for "the virtues of a homogeneous, stable, highly traditional social order," and his belief that this goal would be threatened by the presence in society of a "large number of free-thinking Jews." Precisely.

I would add that Eliot would have felt similarly threatened by any group that sought to broaden his perception of a healthy sense of British nationhood. (His "Sweeney" is hardly an attractive picture of the Irish immigrant, for example.) Now, one may argue that seeking such a broadening of the national identity is not an ignoble desire, and that a minority group has every right to make its presence felt in this way. But it cannot be denied that such an effort, if successful, would alter the way of life held in reverence by defenders of older traditions. And one would think the defenders of the old order entitled to express their concerns about, even distaste for, the impending changes. Such an expression of concern is not the same as calling for street violence or political repression. . . .

I have no inside information about Eliot's or Wren's private conversations. But I would be genuinely surprised if they wished the Jewish people any ill. I would bet, in fact, that they prodded friends and associates to act "gentlemanly" toward minority groups living in England—while, yes, at the same time resisting those changes in English life that would have been necessary for those minority groups to feel fully at home.

Is this base behavior? Well, it is what most people would call nativism. But it is not racist, or in the same category as anti-Semitism, as those terms are generally understood. Not necessarily—we need to know more about the individual expressing the thought to come to that conclusion.

Mr. Gross makes the case that Eliot's statements are "too ferocious" to be considered "drawing-room" anti-Semitism. My understanding of that term is that it refers to a disdain for Jews based more on class than on race; a reflection of a certain stuffiness evident in those to the manner born and their academic defenders—a contempt for the mercantile preoccupations of the strivers among the bourgeoisie. . . . That seems to me a near-perfect description of Eliot's attitudes toward Jews. . . .

JAMES K. FITZPATRICK
Mahopac, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

John Gross misses the point. T.S. Eliot may not have been preoccupied by Jews or things Jewish. However, his use of the small "j" when referring to Jews is indicative of the low regard he had for them. Although the larger body of Eliot's work is not concerned with the Jews, his negative references to and depictions of them reflect his overt anti-Semitism.

Should we dismiss all of Eliot's work because he was anti-Semitic? Should we stop listening to Wagner? Maybe not. Nevertheless, bigotry in any form is a dangerous disease. The promulgation of anti-Semitism in literature and the arts is a threat to all of us when we are lulled into disregarding it because of artistic merit. This we must not do. Intolerance must be recognized first and foremost. To minimize it is a serious threat to all of us and only serves to promote more of the same.

CLAIRE GOTTLIEB
Warren, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Having greatly enjoyed John Gross's book on Shylock, I read his article on T.S. Eliot with interest. Mostly I agree with what he says, but I would like to add a footnote. . . .

The nasty references to Jews in Eliot's early poems have always seemed to me to reflect the kind of clever repartee of his social group. Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis were more violently anti-Semitic, but Eliot shared their outlook to some extent. As his religious convictions deepened, I think his attitude toward Jews changed, quite apart from a reaction to the Holocaust.

John Buchan's statement of sympathy for Jewish suffering, which Mr. Gross quotes, is to his credit, but it would not be fair to expect Eliot to act in precisely the same way. His personality was so very different. He may have expressed

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a change of attitude simply by not writing any more nasty things about Jews.

Eliot is not my favorite 20th-century poet. Yeats—whose political opinions were appalling—is, but there is the puzzle. Ideas matter. They certainly matter in poetry, yet the artistic work can be great even when the thinking is wrong. I have been working on a book about Shelley. I am conservative and religious, so most of his ideas are unpleasant to me—but what a writer. How can I explain it?

PHYLLIS ZIMMERMAN
Pacific Palisades, California

TO THE EDITOR:

John Gross's "Was T.S. Eliot a Scoundrel?" is judiciously balanced in its conclusion that Eliot's anti-Semitism should not seriously affect his worth as a writer.

It should also be recalled that if any writer is to be judged by the degree of anti-Semitism found in the work, who, in Hamlet's words, "should 'scape whipping"? Certainly not Chaucer, Dante, Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, D.H. Lawrence, Evelyn Waugh, *et al.*

At least Eliot did have a sense of self-deprecatory humor. In his "Five-Finger Exercises," he wrote:

> How unpleasant to meet
> Mr. Eliot!
> With his features of
> clerical cut,
> And his brow so grim,
> And his mouth so prim,
> And his conversation so
> nicely
> Restricted to What
> Precisely,
> And IF and Perhaps and
> But.

And six years before his death (1965), when he had reached the age of seventy, he declared in an interview:

> I am just beginning to grow up, to get maturity. In the last few years, everything I'd done up to sixty or so has seemed very childish.

Right you are, Mr. Eliot!

MILTON BIRNBAUM
American International College
Springfield, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

It is true, as John Gross suggests, that most writers, including Jewish ones who began to write between the late 30's and early 50's, when Eliot's reputation was at its peak, were very hesitant to confront the issue of Eliot's anti-Semitism. But some did deal with him through mockery. My favorite example is the pastiche of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," written in Yiddish by Isaac Rosenfeld. Irving Howe in his autobiography quoted a few verses: "*ikh ver alt, ikh ver alt, un mayn pupik vert mir kalt*" ("I grow old, I grow old, and my belly button grows cold"). A pity that Rosenfeld limited this parodic translation to private circulation!

EDWARD ALEXANDER
Seattle, Washington

JOHN GROSS writes:

I sympathize with some of the points James K. Fitzpatrick makes, but he lets Eliot down much too lightly. "Drawing-room anti-Semitism" implies a degree of casualness, and a degree of restraint: it is a decidedly inadequate way of describing either the savagery of the Bleistein/Rachel née Rabinovitch poems—rats don't belong in drawing rooms, well-bred ladies don't have murderous paws—or the systematic, ideological element that can be found in so many of Eliot's references to Jews in poetry and prose alike.

Like Claire Gottlieb, I am against intolerance and in favor of virtue. But we must learn to draw distinctions. She cites Wagner, for instance, but his anti-Semitism seems to me of a different order from Eliot's. It is more ominous; it needs to be judged in a different historical context. And are we really—in 1997—in as much danger as she suggests of minimizing the racial prejudices of the writers of the past? There is an alternative danger (less serious, I grant, but rather more conspicuous at present, and serious enough in its way) of becoming preoccupied with those prejudices at the expense of everything else.

I am grateful to Phyllis Zimmerman, Milton Birnbaum, and Edward Alexander, and especially to Mr. Alexander for quoting the squib by Isaac Rosenfeld. To my untutored ear the couplet about the *pupik* is not only funny, but sounds rather good: doggerel has somehow been raised to the level of poetry. The same could be said of the equivalent passage ("I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled") in *Prufrock* itself, so perhaps Rosenfeld can be thought of as paying tribute to Eliot—up to a point—as well as lampooning him.

Religious Liberty and the Schools

TO THE EDITOR:

Joseph P. Viteritti ["The Last Freedom: Religion, the Constitution, and the Schools," November 1996] is correct in recognizing the First Amendment's anti-establishment clause as the ultimate barrier against federal aid to private and parochial schools. Few advocates of vouchers are willing to admit this, realizing as they do that intelligent Americans remain steadfast in their historical opposition to tax-supported religion. As a parent who sends his daughter to a private religious school without any tax support whatsoever, I remain unpersuaded by Mr. Viteritti's argument. I do not want a voucher, nor do I want anyone else to have vouchers, and I would consider any government program resembling vouchers to be a tyrannical abridgment of my rights.

Mr. Viteritti is quite clever in omitting the most persuasive evidence against his position. In particular, he utterly ignores the two greatest American statements against religious establishments, James Madison's famed "Memorial and Remonstrance" and Thomas Jefferson's equally famous Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. . . .

For Mr. Viteritti to claim that by 1789 individual state constitutions included "provisions protecting religious freedom, but only in a limited sense" is utterly erroneous in light of the sweeping language of the Virginia Statute:

> That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving

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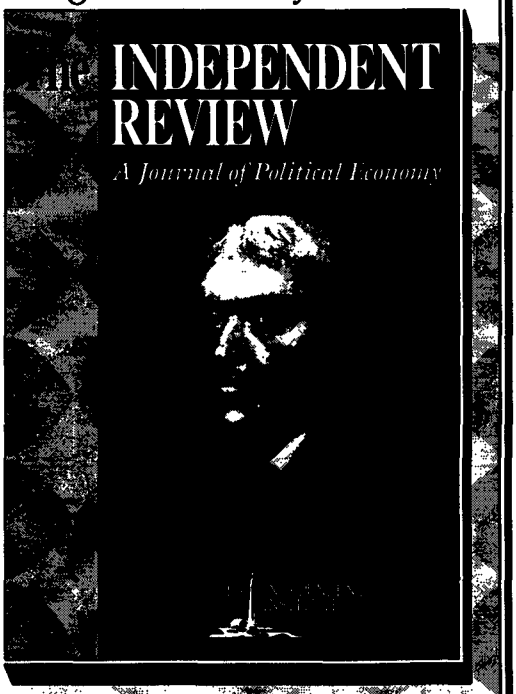

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his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness.

Thus, according to Jefferson, to assess a tax for the support of religious institutions is "sinful and tyrannical." As a parochial school is such an institution, when Mr. Viteritti advocates a special tax advantage for religious education, he advocates tyranny. . . .

What Mr. Viteritti is arguing is that the church, its revenue, its property, and its religious schools should not only be exempt from taxation but that a tax *subsidy* of tuition at religious schools be added to the tax privileges already enjoyed by churches. . . . Indeed, tax subsidies for parochial education would constitute compelling citizens to support a religious ministry. . . . And tuition vouchers would discriminate against members of those sects and faiths which have few or no religious schools—not to mention skeptics and freethinkers—while funneling millions (billions?) of tax-subsidized tuition dollars into the coffers of the Roman Catholic Church, the largest operator of private schools in the United States. . . .

In discussing the "economic disadvantage" of religious families due to prohibitions of tax support to religious education, Mr. Viteritti leaps to "the transformation of the public schools into vehicles of a secularist orthodoxy," as if the two phenomena were related. How absurd that, in arguing a case with frequent reference to the fiats of the Supreme Court, he can ignore the role of this same judicial tyranny in establishing the secularist orthodoxy—indeed, a "positively hostile" environment for religion in schools—which he abhors. . . .

As for "the predicament of religious parents in New York City who cannot afford a private education," I might suggest that genuinely religious parents living in New York City are rather in the position of Lot's family living in Sodom: the first thing to do is to get out. Religious education is far more affordable in rural areas. My daughter's annual tuition is about $1,500—a small price to pay, in my estimate. Many middle-class families spend more on a summer vacation. . . .

Contrary to Mr. Viteritti's assertions, what voucher schemes would do is destroy private education as we know it, turning private schools into merely another branch of the tax-funded morass of ignorance which government has already created in our public schools. This would be "sinful and tyrannical" indeed!

ROBERT STACY MCCAIN
Rome, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR:

It was gratifying to read Joseph P. Viteritti's account of the increasing recognition of the need in our education system to balance the claims of religious disestablishment with those of the free exercise of religion. . . . However, with regard to our public schools, while it is necessary, as Mr. Viteritti points out and President Clinton tried to do with his "Memorandum on Religion in Schools," to protect the freedom of religious speech, this alone will not suffice to restore the secularist system to balance. It will also be necessary, and herein lies the challenge, to reform secularized curricula to account for the historically significant role which religion has played in human events.

In the face of religious pluralism, the Founding Fathers wisely ordained that the government of the United States may not establish any church or recognize any articles of faith, but must, rather, protect the rights of each man to believe what he will. These "operations of the mind," according to Jefferson, "unlike acts of the body," are not "subject to coercion of laws." However—and this is all too often forgotten in contemporary civil discourse—it does not follow that the acts of the body are independent of the operations of the mind, so that even the most liberal of bodies politic cannot remain indifferent to this private realm. . . .

There needs to be a reawakening of the awareness, held by the Founders, that the health of public civil community requires that certain virtues be preserved in the private realm. Put another way, liberalism requires both the subordination of religion through relegation to the private sphere and the maintenance of certain habits that religion alone can inculcate. The question of the hour is whether the laws of the land will permit the means necessary to maintaining both the spirit of religion and that of liberty.

[REVEREND] JOHN-PETER PHAM
Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty
Grand Rapids, Michigan

JOSEPH P. VITERITTI writes:

Robert Stacy McCain is obviously pleased with the education his daughter receives at a private religious school. But, as a devout separationist, he would not accept a government-supported tuition voucher, nor would he allow anyone else who might want to send his child to a similar institution to do so. According to him, such vouchers amount to nothing less than political tyranny.

Like so many separationists, Mr. McCain invokes the writings of Jefferson and Madison to support his viewpoint, claiming that my omission of the documents he mentions is a "clever" attempt to manipulate the evidence. I have, in fact, studied and written about these historic figures with great care and admiration, but to enlist their 18th-century documents to argue against school choice at the threshold of the 21st-century is a bit of a leap. And if Mr. McCain would read beyond the two documents he cites, he would find that Jefferson's and Madison's writings on the subject of disestablishment are not entirely consistent.

Yes, Jefferson's Virginia proposal of 1779 is one of the most articulate statements for the separation of church and state extant, but it says nothing about how education fits into the constitutional scheme. The same Jefferson subsequently submitted a series of five bills to the Virginia legislature that were far less separationist and more accommodationist in tone.

Yes, Madison did speak out eloquently for disestablishment in his "Memorial and Remonstrance," as he had in the "Detached Memoranda" of 1817. However, the former also reads clearly as an appeal for freedom of conscience:

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Before any man can be considered a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe. And if a member of Civil Society who enters into any subordinate association must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the general authority, much more must any man who becomes a member of any particular society do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal sovereign.

This quotation marks the point, hinted at in John-Peter Pham's perceptive letter, at which Jefferson and Madison part company. Jefferson, whose thinking was influenced by the liberal philosopher John Locke, often drew a distinction between freedom of conscience and freedom of action, as if it were possible for a moral person, religious or otherwise, to relieve himself of his conscience when going about daily life; or that the Constitution somehow required a separation between conscience and action as a way of securing religious liberty.

There is indeed a strain within the liberal tradition that treats religious affiliation as a source of civic tension, a potential cause of disloyalty to the state. Madison, more anchored in the republican tradition, understood religious association to be supportive of civic virtue, believing that it strengthened democracy. He argued in *Federalist #52* that the development of numerous and diverse religious sects is a safeguard against political tyranny, just as he had argued (in *Federalist #10*) that the growth of numerous and diverse political factions is a safeguard for freedom.

As Reverend Pham observes, in order for the First Amendment to protect religious freedom, we must find a reasonable balance between the establishment clause and the free-exercise clause. The real objective of the former was to prohibit the establishment of a state religion. While we may now choose to interpret it to mean that there should be no direct state aid to any and all religious institutions (commonly permissible at the Founding), prohibiting aid to individuals that would allow them to choose schools consistent with their own beliefs is a dangerous disruption of the delicate balance that protects the free-exercise rights of all people—especially those who, unlike Mr. McCain, cannot afford the price of private-school tuition or who cannot simply move, as he so casually advises them to do. These poor families are thereby forced to send their children to schools pervaded, as Mr. McCain notes, by a "morass of ignorance" as well as by a curriculum that offends their religious sensibilities.

Unfortunately, both now and in the past those who have had the privilege of overseeing public education in this nation have not been sensitive to the needs of religious minorities. Our history is replete with such instances. Horace Mann, the founder of the common school, for example, promoted a form of mainstream Protestantism that was offensive to both Jews and Catholics. The liberal philosopher John Dewey, one of the most influential thinkers in American education in this century, was an avowed atheist who regarded religion as a form of superstition worthy of contempt. As long as poor people are confronted with a monopoly that leaves them no choice but to send their children to government-run schools, they remain vulnerable to the whims and prejudices of educational leaders (some of them, like local school boards, elected by political majorities) insensitive to their views.

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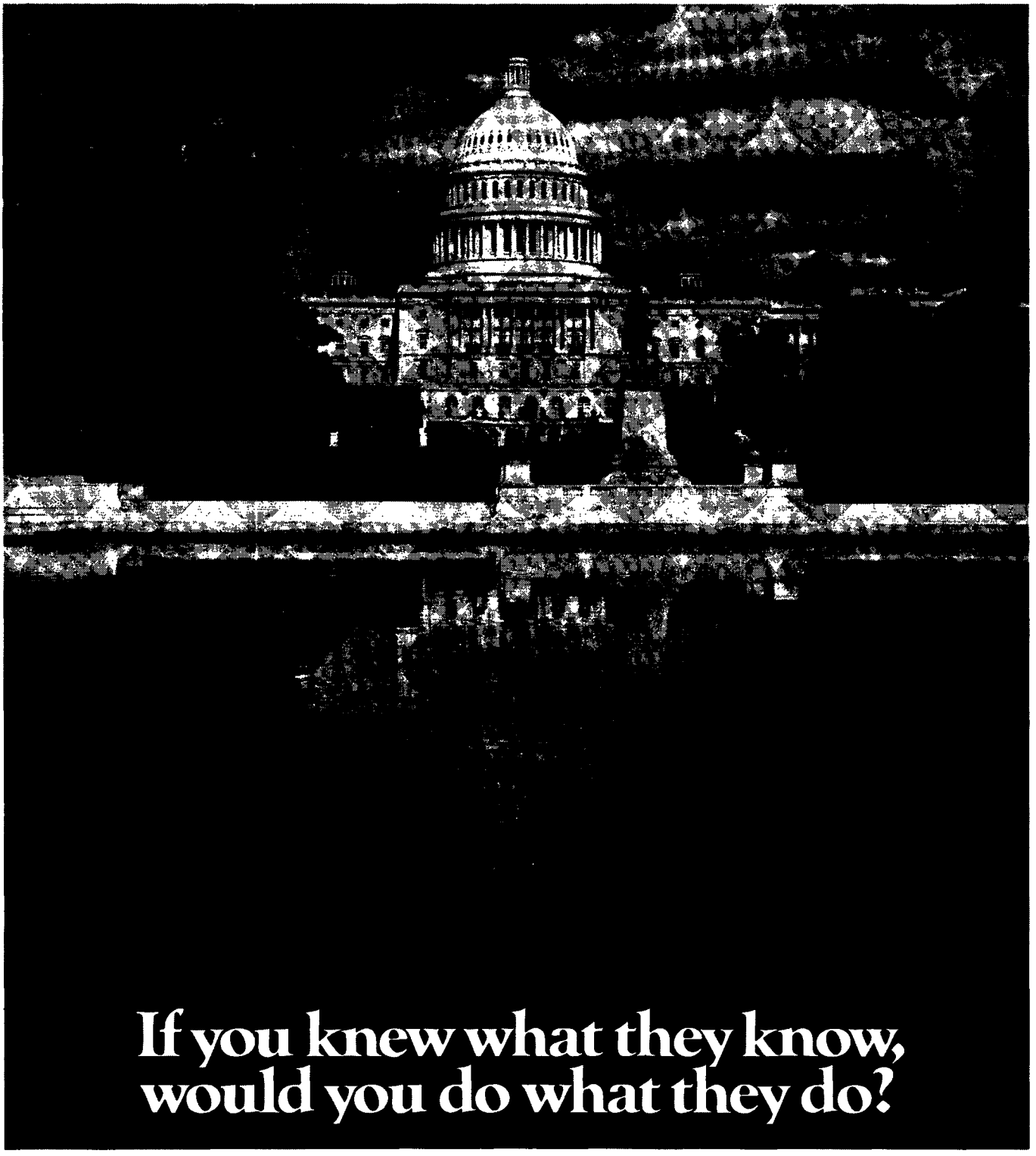

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Commentary
March 1997

How the Intellectuals Took Over
(And What to Do About It)

David Gelernter

HERE IS a true story about a piece of ground on Long Island. It had a lawn on it and was doing fine. One day a contractor decided to put up some houses nearby. Bulldozers rushed in and reshaped the plot: it used to be flat; now it was sloped. The contractor's men planted a new lawn and went away, but the ground was no longer in a position to support a lawn in the style to which lawns are accustomed. After every rain, the runoff from surrounding lots would carve a deep gully down its center. Then the contractor's men would show up and dump soil in the gully and smooth it out and plant more seed, but each storm was the same story.

It was nearly a year before the game was called off. Big structural changes had been imposed on the land, and had to be matched by big structural changes in the landscape—otherwise the ground would continue to be unstable and gradually wash away. Substantial plants were called for, to hold the slope together with their roots. When the men who had spent their time frantically patching the gully stopped for a moment, thought it over, put aside their shovels and ordered in a bunch of bushes and small trees, the solution (although it took a while to grab hold and stick) was finally in hand.

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Not to be discouraging, but why is it that, no matter how many Republicans we put on the Supreme Court, it is still capable of deciding a case like the Justice Department's against the Virginia Military Institute *seven to one* (Clarence Thomas not voting) in favor of smashing the old order and putting in a new one, on the scientific principle that men and women are in practice interchangeable? How come a fire-breathing Republican House roars into town as it did in 1994, has an excellent few months, accomplishes much, and then the fight starts to leak out of it until by the time it is reelected it is an intellectual flat tire and Washington is rattling along as usual on its rims? Why is it that, more than a decade after a report on the rottenness of our schools gave us fits, induced nationwide remorse and an unshakable desire to do better, the public schools are the same? Or worse?

Yes, there have been victories, no question. Yet by and large we are patching gullies and wasting our time. We ought to put down our shovels and take a hard look at the country's basic shape, which has changed fundamentally. Unless we come to grips with the new shape and meet it on its own terms, our efforts at repair will come to nothing and the nation will continue as it has been, washing down the drain.

IT IS generally agreed that our big national change happened in the 1960's. "The 1960's," the historian Paul Johnson writes, are "one of the

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most crucial decades in modern history, akin to the 1790's." The perversity I want to understand starts in the 1960's.

Two tectonic plates that used to float nowhere near each other collided, one rode up over the other, and things have never been the same. What happened was a sort of coup. The nation's elite positions had mainly been occupied by a certain class of persons. Persons from a different class loomed up, jettisoned the old occupants, and took over. It *had* to happen this way because, to a remarkable extent, we pump our elite class out of our prestige colleges and universities, and after World War II we turned those institutions upside down. The new elite is dominated by intellectuals and their trainees; the implications are vast.

Years ago, the "New Class" theorists made a similar claim. They argued that the huge postwar expansion in college attendance had created a new elite of intellectuals and their disciples, and that a power struggle between them and the old elite (whose champions were the leaders of the business world, for example) was changing the country. The theory originated in the 1960's and had its definitive expression in a 1979 essay collection, *The New Class?* (edited by B. Bruce-Briggs), that is still required reading for anyone who wants to understand modern America.

The New Class? holds up amazingly well nearly twenty years later, but today we can replace foresight by hindsight (cheaper stuff, but more reliable) and lay out a somewhat different case. Time has passed, and where the New Class theorists saw a battleground, the battle today is over: the intellectuals have won. William F. Buckley, Jr. once made the famous pronouncement that he would rather be ruled by the first 2,000 names in the Boston phonebook than by the combined faculties of Harvard and MIT. Now that we *are* ruled by the combined faculties of Harvard and MIT, you can see what he meant.

CONTEMPLATE A couple of interesting intellectual crowds: the poets, painters, writers, and *salon*-keepers around the young Picasso in 1905 Paris, say—some of them bohemians but some true-blue intellectuals, with theories to sell and ideas to put over. Or the Trotskyists around *Partisan Review* in 1930's New York. There is scant love lost in either group for organized religion, the military, social constraints on sexual behavior, traditional sex roles and family structures, formality or fancy dress or good manners, authority in general. Intellectuals have had these tendencies throughout the 20th century, and back to the 19th and into the 18th. But illegitimacy did not zoom up in 1905 Paris. No legal assault on public displays of religion took place in 1930's America; nor did divorce rates explode or sexual constraints crack wide open. None of these things happened *until the intelligentsia took over*. And *then* they happened. It would be absurd to claim that intellectuals have imposed their tastes universally. But it is impossible to miss the obvious trend—the translucent, overlaying tint that is thinner in some places, deeper in others.

You see the evidence everywhere of rule by intellectualized elite. David Letterman interviews the actor Kevin Kline on TV. Letterman has a question about one of Kline's movies in which "you play a Frenchman—French *person*," correcting himself. It is one of those moments where the ground fractures and you see straight to the core of modern America. Letterman is no intellectual, as far as I know, but he is part of the new elite and talks its language. We nearly all do nowadays.

The idea that the "man" in "Frenchman" or the "his" in "everyone took his seat" excludes females is ridiculous, and the intelligentsia knows it. (Or knew it: in today's schoolroom the facts are suppressed on principle.) Let us assume that the indeterminate "man" and "he" originally reflected male dominance; but things had been otherwise for a long time when Eudora Welty wrote, in her 1984 memoirs, that "It is always vaunting, of course, to imagine yourself inside another person, but it is what a story writer does in every piece of work; it is his first step, and his last too." "*He* has lost all suggestion of maleness in these circumstances," noted E.B. White in the final, 1979 edition of *The Elements of Style*. "It has no pejorative connotation; it is never incorrect."

But the intelligentsia had a point to make, and decided to wipe these usages out. (There was no conspiracy at work, just a congenial, like-minded group of decision-makers.) "He" had to be "he or she," "mankind" had to be "humankind," and so forth. These words were repeated endlessly and in time—surprise!—they caught on.

So here we have Letterman and Kline, and Kline happens to *be* a male, actually, and even if you had the nonsensical idea that "Frenchman" means only a French *male*, Kline's character is nevertheless a Frenchman. But after decades of elite babbling, "man" is radioactive. Letterman uses the suffix but the moment it is out of his mouth he drops it instinctively, as if he had reached for a sandwich and come up with a rat-

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tlesnake. This is what it means for an intellectualized elite to be in charge.

How did it happen? Did an "intellectualized class" overwhelm the old business-and-upper class, as the New Class theorists had it? Or was the outcome decided by a bloodless coup inside the generals' tent, within the tiny upper stratum that calls the shots and sets the tone?

No doubt there was a big engagement out on the field—but a takeover at the top was decisive.

Consider that the elite positions themselves have not changed much. Ranking politicians and their staffers, judges and top lawyers, leading bureaucrats and business and financial and newspaper and entertainment people, prominent clergymen and academics: they were the big cheeses of 1930 and 1960 and, with an adjustment here and there—entertainers up, clergymen down—they still are. And the supply lines that feed these positions are also the same, at least in one key respect: *the prestige colleges play a central role in staffing the elite*. They did in 1930 and 1960 and still do—the Princetons and Harvards, the Stanfords, Georgetowns, and Amhersts.

A 1990 *Fortune* magazine survey of CEO's at Fortune 500 companies found that "the dominance of the Ivy League is, if anything, increasing. Whereas 14 percent of the former CEO's surveyed hold Ivy League degrees, nearly 19 percent of the current CEO's do." Yale ranked first as a CEO-supplier in the 1990 survey, Princeton second. Of eight U.S. Presidents since 1961, half have been Ivy League products one way or another—Kennedy from Harvard, Bush from Yale, Ford and Clinton from Yale Law School.

I could go on, but the point is obvious. Students and parents who pay fabulous sums for prestige degrees have their reasons, and quality of teaching is not exactly the whole story. It goes without saying that loads of important people graduate from unprestigious colleges, or from none, and college training barely matters at all to our brightest lights; it beads up and rolls right off them. But the top colleges swing a lot of weight today, as they did in 1960 and 1930. Make big changes to these institutions and big changes in the American elite *must* follow.

And big changes were made, great big ones. Starting in the late 1940's, admission and hiring policies were transformed; broadly speaking, intellectuals took over the faculty and the student bodies. I mean "took over" in the sense of progressing not from zero influence to total control but from a subordinate to a dominating position.

The universities had always harbored *some* intellectuals, but Harvard or Princeton students used to be mainly the richest, not the smartest; on the faculty, social connections used to be as good a criterion for tenure as any. The Yale man and Vassar girl were social types, not incipient intellectuals. The goal at the fancy colleges used to be to *civilize* the undergraduates, which involved a certain amount of teaching and a large amount of socializing, domesticating, and attitude-inculcating. A 1941 Yale alumni handbook (cited in Dan Oren's *Joining the Club*, 1985):

> It is generally assumed that, even with a scholarship, the poor boy entering Yale will be handicapped socially unless he happens to be an athletic star. He is assumed to have no chance to compete successfully with the graduates of Eastern preparatory schools for anything except scholastic honors.

This assumption was natural but wrong. "Yale," the handbook continues, "will polish rough exteriors." Yale was in the polishing business.

Seven years later, the dean was writing in a report to the president that "What I want for Yale college is an intellectual eminence as great as her athletic or her social or her eminence in activities of all sorts." And things moved briskly in the dean's direction. One dramatic sign was the big influx of Jews. The intellectualizing trend went a lot farther than bringing in Jews, of course, but Jews are a dye marker that allows us to trace a new class of people as it moves into the system—a new class distinguished by intellect and not social standing. At the prestige colleges today, the goal is to inculcate the intellectual's habits, not the lady's or gentleman's.

As I understand them, the New Class theorists argued that it was not so much the radically changed *character* of a college education as the huge growth in *numbers* of the college-educated that created a new American culture. This was Irving Kristol's influential view—the New Class emerged out of "the enormous expansion in higher education, and the enormous increase in the college-educated"—and many others agreed.

That increase was stunning: in 1940, 4.6 percent of the 25-and-over population had completed college; in 1975, roughly 14 percent had. It had to be important, had to play some role in reshaping society. But there are reasons, nevertheless, to be wary of this aspect of the New Class

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theory. It is hard to believe that the number of elite positions has grown anywhere near as fast as the ranks of the college-educated. Yet time after time we find a striking change of *character* in the occupants of powerful, long-established positions: the presidents of major universities, leaders of the mainline Protestant churches, federal judges, Hollywood big-shots. Their numbers have grown only modestly since 1960, but their views have greatly changed. There are fewer major newspapers, but their outlook has turned upside down.

Nor is the role of U.S. colleges in general wholly clear-cut. Seymour Martin Lipset wrote in the New Class anthology that "American academe is in fact sharply divided in its political views." But one reason "for the widespread characterization of the professoriate as 'Left' is that the most liberal academics are in the most prestigious and politically influential positions." The prestige colleges are disproportionately influential, and disproportionately liberal.

At any rate, the New Class theory does not fully capture an essential aspect of the intellectual takeover, an aspect that resonates with other events of that era and gives the story its poignancy—makes the reshaping of American culture not a conspiracy but a tragedy. *The old elite made the revolution itself.* Nothing compelled the Harvards and Yales to change their ways. They did it on their own; they kicked things off by volunteering to make room for a new elite.

The rise of the intellectualized elite is connected, in this view, to the worldwide retreat of the deeply shaken upper classes after World War II. Today's American culture was shaped ultimately by the same forces that made Europe abandon empire—in some cases under the gun, in other important ones because the will to rule was gone. Richard Brookhiser writes something similar in *The Way of the WASP* (1991): "In their guilt, WASP's not only do the right thing by those who wish to become WASP's, but they extend themselves for the benefit of those who intend to remain something else."

Assume that the only history you know is the postwar transformation of the prestige colleges. What predictions would you make? The faculty transformation picks up steam throughout the 1950's. By the early 60's, it is largely complete: the main hiring criteria now are intellectual rigor and distinction, and young professors are increasingly apt to be card-carrying intellectuals. Students matriculating in the early 60's are the first who will get the full treatment. In the student bodies themselves, would-be intellectuals are increasingly prominent, making students as a group even more receptive to faculty influence.

The first of the new breed ought to be done and pop out of college somewhere—check your watches—in the mid-60's, and out of graduate and professional schools starting in the late 60's. (Robert Bork on his experiences teaching at Yale: "The change at the Law School began abruptly with the class that entered in 1967. Unlike the traditional liberal students of the second- and third-year classes, whom they frightened as much as they dismayed the faculty, these students were angry, intolerant, highly vocal, and case-hardened against logical argument.") In the late 1960's, a struggle should begin inside the elite; but chances are, the old guard will call a retreat before long and the young guard will take over. After all, this is the same old guard that remade the colleges in the first place. It has been turning itself out to pasture for years.

In this reading, our national turmoil over the Vietnam war was a symptom and not the disease, embittering a transformation that was in the cards anyway.

LET US say there *was* a coup at the top: that, after the war, intellectuals took the helm at the prestige colleges; that a new breed of intellectualized graduates duly emerged to claim (as these graduates always had) a large share of the nation's elite positions; that the character of the elite changed radically in consequence. Today's elite is intellectualized, the old elite was not. Why should that matter? What differences does it make?

The difference is this: the old elite used to get on fairly well with the country it was set over. Members of the old social upper-crust elite were richer and better educated than the public at large, but approached life on basically the same terms. The public went to church and so did they. The public went into the army and so did they. The public staged simpler weddings and the elite put on fancier ones, but they mostly all used the same dignified words and no one self-expressed. They agreed (this being America) that art was a waste, scientists were questionable, engineering and machines and progress and nature were good. Some of the old-time attitudes made sense, some did not; but the staff and their bosses basically concurred. (George Bush was elected in part, Brookhiser suggests, because of public interest in restoring these arrangements.)

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Relations between the elite and the nation are very different today. The enmity between Intellectual and Bourgeois is sheepman against cattleman, farm against city, Army versus Navy: a cliché but real. Ever since there *was* a middle class, intellectuals have despised it. When intellectuals were outsiders, their loves and hates never mattered much. Today they are the bosses and their tastes matter greatly.

The essay in *The New Class?* that went deepest into basic cultural questions was Norman Podhoretz's; he expanded on Lionel Trilling's idea of the intellectuals as an "adversary culture." During the 1960's and early 70's, the intelligentsia's hatred for middle-class society was something fierce. The ferocity could partly be explained, Podhoretz wrote, by the fact that "despite all the concessions" the middle class had made, "it still refused to be *ruled* by the intellectuals." Today the intelligentsia runs the show, and its hatred for class enemies has been toned down—exactly as Podhoretz would have predicted. But the hatred is still there, and comes through loud and clear on special occasions. Moreover, it has undergone a portentous change of focus. It used to be aimed at least partly upward, at the "establishment." Now that intellectuals *are* the establishment, it is aimed entirely downward, at the public at large.

Today's elite loathes the nation it rules. Nothing personal, just a fundamental difference in world view, but the feeling is unmistakable. Occasionally it escapes in a scorching geyser. Michael Lewis reports in the *New Republic* on the fall '96 Dole presidential campaign: "The crowds flip the finger at the busloads of journalists and chant rude things at them as they enter each arena. The journalists, for their part, wear buttons that say 'Yeah, I'm the Media. Screw You.'" The crowd hates the reporters, the reporters hate the crowd—an even match-up, except that the reporters wield power and the crowd (in effect) wields none.

The Virginia Military Institute used to be male-only. The elite didn't like that, and set to work. Thus Geoffrey Norman in the *American Spectator*:

> A *Washington Post* columnist wrote that VMI existed in a "medieval time warp, in which brotherhood is forged through sadomasochistic rituals in a forgotten monastery supported by the state for its own Byzantine purposes." A state senator from Virginia notified the world that she had "trouble with young men who want to shave their heads and shower together."

The elite hated VMI, and no doubt VMI hated the elite—another even match-up, except that, when it occurred to the elite one afternoon on the way to the water cooler that VMI's way of life ought to be wiped out (just a casual notion, inasmuch as the likes of VMI hardly matter to the elite one way or the other), it was duly wiped out. The old VMI was crushed like a beer can under a tank tread and the Institute is now, needless to say, co-ed. Having put things right and fundamentally refashioned the quirky, proud old college, the elite is unlikely to think about it again for the next 100 years. Again, this is no conspiracy; the lawyers who argued for the Justice Department, the reporters who covered the case, and the Supreme Court majority that decided it just happened to see eye-to-eye with the intelligentsia.

The nation today is captured perfectly in a *New Republic* cartoon. (The *New Republic* is the conscience of liberalism; the cartoon is unrepresentative of the magazine but *is* representative of something bigger.) The first three panels show a white male whining about affirmative action, presumably having become a victim of it himself. "Affirmative action has left a bitter taste," he says. "It's nothing more than discrimination, and discrimination of any kind is wrong. People should be judged by what they can do, not what group they're part of." In the last panel we get an explanation for his heartfelt stand against bigotry: a bottle and spoon, with a label on the bottle reading "Affirmative Action—A Taste of His Own Medicine." (As if he used to be in the habit of pummeling people; we start pummeling *him*, and he tells us, "Stop!—I see at last that pummeling people is wrong!") Over the bottle the cartoonist has written his laconic verdict on the "affirmative-action" treatment: "Seems to have worked."

It is amazing how much the cartoonist has unwittingly let slip about the elite and its world view. Our whining white male did not prescribe this medicine for himself; patients don't do that. We prescribed it *for* him—we doctors, we the elite, we who know better. He was sick and we cured him. Intellectuals going back a century and more have had lots of prescriptions in store for the obstinate, dim-witted public, many medicines awaiting deployment.

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Does the public hate the elite as unambiguously as the elite hates it? President Clinton is *the* paradigmatic intellectualized-elitenik, and a public that elected him twice could hardly be eaten up by class hatred (which is, it hardly needs saying, a good thing). Although the public's political preferences have drifted rightward in recent years, they have been remarkably stable over the last few decades. Does this signify acceptance of the new order, or at least resignation? Maybe. But notice how little there is to choose in a typical election on basic cultural grounds, even if Republicans and Democrats stand for very different policies.

An American Middle East-watcher made a fascinating comment years ago about the Islamic revolution in Iran. To the Iranians, he said, Americans and Soviets looked pretty much the same. There were huge philosophical differences between them. But they all wore pants. Orthodox Islam branches away from the West at a more basic level than the point where Communism and democratic capitalism peel apart.

The divide between the American middle and the American elite may be more basic than the difference between Republicans and Democrats. Leading Republicans speak the elite's language just as the Democrats do ("Diversity is our strength"—Newt Gingrich), honor and obey the basic tenets of orthodox feminism, are no more inclined than Democrats to be hemmed in by traditional family structure. When VMI's future was on the line, you didn't see Republicans rallying to its side. A few complained; most shrugged. At their 1996 convention, Republicans lavished attention on AIDS victims and rape victims, former welfare mothers and powerful female politicians. God bless 'em every one, but in cultural terms the Democrats and Republicans are all wearing pants.

WHAT TO do? I would put aside politics for a while and plant bushes, attempt to stabilize the culture.

The universities are set for a long time and we cannot change them. What we could do is hire their graduates into new institutions with their own marked personalities, strong enough to counteract the powerful indoctrination engines of university and grade school and everyday life. Today's newspapers and popular magazines, museums and TV stations, movie studios and schools mainly line up with the intellectualized elite, but no law says that it has to be this way forever.

The new institutions I have in mind would have no political agendas. They would merely promote cant-free history, apolitical art, nonfeminist news reporting for the masses, the teaching of technique and not self-esteem, moral seriousness, ideology-free language—items that today's elite despises and is attempting to destroy. They would build on the groundwork laid down by conservative and neoconservative intellectuals over decades. Their aim would be a modest but steady increase in the number of Americans who can say "Frenchman" without flinching.

I have been told repeatedly that this idea might be good in principle but is doomed. The logistical and financial problems are too great, conservatives (being conservative) lack the necessary passion to change the country, the cultural forces of the Left are too strong to beat. When I hear these arguments I am reminded of E.B. White writing to his publisher in 1958 in connection with his proposed revision of William Strunk, Jr.'s *The Elements of Style*:

> I cannot, and will-shall not, attempt to adjust the unadjustable Mr. Strunk to the modern liberal of the English department, the anything-goes fellow. . . . I am against him, temperamentally and because I have seen the work of *his* disciples, and I say the hell with him.

Is the cause of good writing lost, now that academia has dropped it? "To me," White says, "no cause is lost." The chances of our repairing American society might be near zero. But I find it inspiring anyway that I can address the direct descendant of the "anything-goes fellow," the intellectual who commands modern culture, in White's voice. I am against him. I have seen the work of his disciples, and I say the hell with him. To me no cause is lost.

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Johnnie Cochran's Secret

Christopher Caldwell

THERE IS a juridical bittersweetness to the February 4 verdict in O.J. Simpson's civil trial, which found him "responsible" for the battery of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and the killing of her friend Ronald Goldman. On the one hand, a degree of justice—an insufficient degree, to be sure—has been done. On the other hand, the swiftness with which the jury recognized Simpson's liability served as further ratification that Simpson's *criminal* trial, which ended in October 1995 with his acquittal on murder charges, was an outrage and a travesty.

For the evidence in that trial was the strongest in any publicly tried case of this century. Anyone who retains a flicker of doubt that it was O.J. Simpson who murdered both Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman need only look at M.L. Rantala's *O.J. Unmasked*,[1] a devastating point-by-point reading of the forensic evidence and one of the most useful of the many books that have been published on the case. There is, indeed, no intellectually serious argument to be made for Simpson's innocence, nor is anyone likely to try to make such an argument any time soon: this trial will never divide elite opinion as did, say, the Sacco and Vanzetti or the Alger Hiss case.

More hotly contested is the question of *why* the system failed so badly—but that, too, is yielding to a kind of consensus. Recent books and articles have focused in particular on "the race card" played by Simpson's defense team—a card which, as the apostate defense counsel Robert Shapiro confessed after the trial, was "dealt from the very bottom of the deck." According to this view, the defense underhandedly implied that there was a racist conspiracy at work against Simpson, spearheaded by the Los Angeles police and embodied in the words and deeds of Detective Mark Fuhrman, and this wholesale imputation of racism was what poisoned the atmosphere of the courtroom and helped wrest an unjust verdict from a credulous jury.

The race-card theorists are correct about two things: race was the central consideration in the trial, and it was the defense that raised the issue. But the race-card thesis also obscures more than it reveals. For the defense lawyers were not the only actors in this case; if the racial theme was brought into the courtroom improperly, why were the media, the judge, and the prosecution unable to counter it?

FIRST, THE defense. According to *American Tragedy*,[2] an inside view of the defense team by Lawrence Schiller and *Time*'s James Will-

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[1] Catfeet Press, 271 pp. (paper), $15.95.

[2] Random House, 702 pp., $27.50.

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werth, none of Simpson's lawyers was under the illusion that their case could be won on the evidence, which pointed unerringly in Simpson's direction. As Schiller recounts in one particularly telling anecdote, Shapiro summarized the matter this way for his wavering colleague Robert Kardashian: "'You've been driving this car for a year. Your daughter drives it. Your dog rides in this car. And I bet if we went through your car carefully, we would not find blood on your carpet' [as there was in Simpson's Bronco]."

What to do, then? One of the myths of the trial centers on the last-minute plea by Simpson's attorney, Johnnie Cochran, for "jury nullification"—that is, that jurors use their votes not to decide the guilt or innocence of the defendant but to "send a message" about the social problems of police corruption and white racism. This, it is said, was a tactic adopted in the heat of the moment as Cochran was making his closing arguments. But it was no such thing. Rather, the defense consciously pursued a race-war strategy from the very outset, casting the trial as a battle between right (black victims) and wrong (white cops). According to Schiller, Cochran told his partners:

> I know it's our job to get Simpson off, but I think our legacy should be to show this country that the cops will do just about anything. They will lie because they believe that the end justifies the means.

Of course, while posing as a defender of victims of the system, Cochran was able to exploit the system to the fullest, and enjoyed more rights—both statutory and "cultural"—than his counterparts. The Simpson defense, for instance, was entitled (under the 1978 case *People* v. *Wheeler*) to appeal the verdict if it found the state had been purging blacks from the jury. That the prosecution had no such recourse was one of the factors that allowed the defense to purge the jury of *whites*. Thus did a jury impaneled to judge a crime committed in the wealthiest neighborhood of a 10-percent-black city wind up virtually all-poor and all-black.

All the Simpson lawyers, not just Cochran, collaborated in this strategy, although here again the new consensus wrongly suggests otherwise. Thus, Jeffrey Toobin, whose *The Run of His Life*[3] offers the best general overview of the case, upholds the work of Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld, Simpson's "DNA lawyers," saying they "constructed a serious forensic and nonracial defense." They did not. Although, unlike Cochran (who is black), they could not make direct racial appeals to a black jury, they too advanced the idea of a racist conspiracy against Simpson—one that would have involved *dozens* of police officers, technicians, and administrators. They differed from Cochran only in clothing their argument in biotechnological jargon. They constructed a frame-up they knew did not occur, implied racism where they knew it did not exist, and in the end they also undermined confidence in a branch of forensic science whose trustworthiness they had spent their careers establishing. Here are Barry Scheck's closing words to the jury concerning the DNA evidence:

> You must distrust it. You have to distrust it. You cannot render a verdict in this case beyond a reasonable doubt on this kind of evidence. Because if you do, no one is safe, no one.

In short, Cochran, Scheck, and Simpson's other lawyers were remarkably consistent in their arguments from race, and nothing if not forthright in advancing them.

THEN, THE media. That the press refrained from criticizing or even calling attention to the shenanigans of the defense may at first seem one of the enduring mysteries of the trial. Of course, the defense, no doubt out of an awareness of just how vulnerable it was on the evidence, spared no effort when it came to media control: an assistant, Shawn Chapman, was assigned just to police the interviews of various principals in the case. Thus, when NBC's Katie Couric sat down with young Jason Simpson to ask whether his father was a wife-beater, and Jason replied, "What do you mean by a wife-beater?" Chapman yelled, "Okay, stop!" and then bullied Couric into not using the tape.

But it must also be said that the media did not need much prodding to display the proper racial sensitivity. Not two hours after the Jason Simpson episode, Chapman shepherded CBS's Connie Chung to an interview with Simpson's mother, Eunice. Chung asked Mrs. Simpson how it felt to have a son who, growing up, "could get any girl he wanted." Eunice replied: "Women didn't care if he was Jack the Ripper." This time, Chapman did not have to argue for long; Chung quickly volunteered not to use the exchange on the air. (This was the same Chung who had rushed to broadcast a damaging off-the-record interview

[3] Random House, 466 pp., $25.00.

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with another mother, Newt Gingrich's, shortly after the 1994 congressional elections.) Or again, when a *Los Angeles Times* reporter was roughed up—twice—by Cochran's bodyguards from the Nation of Islam, the reporter's own paper, which had assigned several journalists to cover every last scrap of news about the trial, chose not to notice.

The same delicacy, if that is the word, characterized Judge Lance Ito's response to the increasingly incendiary racial atmosphere in his courtroom. Ito, who had warned the prosecution against wearing pins betokening solidarity with slain police officers, raised no objection when Cochran and his partners wore African kente cloth in court. He even refrained from censuring Cochran for a direct attack on his own integrity. ("The cover-up [of the racial conspiracy] continues," Cochran said of an Ito ruling.) When Robert Heidstra, a neighbor of the Simpsons, testified that on the night of the murders he heard a voice that sounded like a black man's, Johnnie Cochran's ludicrous objection—"I think it is totally improper in America, at this time in 1995, to hear this and endure this"—was sustained by Ito. But when, on the other hand, black jurors clearly sympathetic to the defense complained about racial tensions in the courtroom, Ito bent over backward to "help" by making the jury more monolithically black and even ousted a white juror on the basis of an anonymous letter (in all likelihood from a defense-connected source) which alleged, falsely, that the juror was working on a book about the trial.

FINALLY, THERE was the prosecution, which stood to lose the most from the racialization of the courtroom and which should therefore have resisted it the most strenuously. In fact, however, once race became an issue in the trial, prosecutors Marcia Clark and Christopher Darden unilaterally disarmed themselves by hastening to demonstrate their own political *bona fides* as card-carrying racial liberals.

Consider the matter of jury selection. DecisionQuest, a jury-consulting firm that had volunteered its services to the Los Angeles district attorney's office, urged Clark to be wary of middle-aged black women, whom polls showed to be almost unanimous in their support for Simpson. In mock juries, on a 1-to-10 scale, black women gave Simpson approval ratings of 9 and 10, while on the same scale Nicole scored 7, 5, and 3—and Marcia Clark even lower. "Black women," writes Toobin, "especially could not abide Marcia Clark," and he lists a few of their responses to her: "'Shifty.' 'Strident.' 'Bitch.' 'Bitch.' 'Bitch.'" Clark, however, as a proud liberal, was certain she enjoyed a special rapport with her black contemporaries, and rejected the advice of the jury consultants out of hand. She raised no objection when the court impaneled nine blacks, eight of them women. She never asked why the defense might want such a lopsided jury, and never thought of calling them racists for it.

Instead of going head-on against the defense's effort to turn the case into a civil-rights debate, Clark tried wanly to turn it into a debate over still another liberal cause, namely, spousal abuse—as if one had to be a partisan of women's lib in order to understand that a double murder was wrong. The tone was set by her colleague Christopher Darden's opening statement: "The evidence will show that the face you see . . . is the face of a batterer, a wife-beater, an abuser, a controller." For evidence of such "controlling," Darden cited the gifts Simpson had bought Nicole: "By the time she was nineteen, she was driving a Porsche. He got it for her."

Into the terrain thus abandoned by the prosecution—the terrain of simple moral categories—the defense quickly moved with a vengeance. They, at least, were no liberals, and they were certainly unafraid of seeming insensitive or of taking an insufficiently hard line on wife-beating. Their story was simplicity itself and, unlike the prosecution's, internally consistent: white people hate black people and will do anything—including entering into impossibly complicated conspiracies—just to harm them.

And this is a message the prosecution bought. Darden, in his final summation, told the jurors, "Nobody wants to do anything to this man. . . . Whatever you do, the decision is yours, and I'm glad that it is not mine." This, considering the overwhelming and unambiguous evidence against Simpson, must certainly figure among the most amazing statements in a trial replete with amazing statements. But no less astounding was what a browbeaten Marcia Clark said after the jurors had heard the tapes on which Detective Mark Fuhrman made racist remarks:

> I don't think that there is anyone in this courtroom, in this country, that could possibly envy me. I cannot afford the luxury of being Marcia Clark the citizen. I am Marcia Clark the prosecutor and I stand before you today . . . not in defense of Mark Fuhrman, but in defense of a case.

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Today, one may surmise that Marcia Clark "the prosecutor" is crushed to have lost the case of her life, and rueful that a murderer is back on the streets. But Marcia Clark "the citizen" seems to have felt an instinctive need to apologize for doing something so low as prosecuting a murderer when more important matters, like taking a correct line on race, were at stake. In her words, in her tone, in her whole style of presentation, it is evident that Marcia Clark thought herself on the wrong side.

IN SUM, race was introduced into the Simpson case not sneakily but boldly and unapologetically; and once it was introduced, everyone, but everyone, fell into line.

This, to be sure, is not how things are seen in the various recent attempts to explain the otherwise inexplicable verdict. Instead, one tack has been to maintain that the forces arrayed behind Simpson were exceptionally competent, while those arrayed against him were exceptionally deficient. This thesis is superficially plausible, but it is false.

That Johnnie Cochran is a maestro of the courtroom is a staple of a number of books, including Joseph Bosco's sycophantic *A Problem of Evidence: How the Prosecution Freed O.J. Simpson*,[4] and also of the black media. In fact, however, aside from his admittedly remarkable talent for inflaming racial passions, Cochran operated at the very margins of competence. His opening statement was a rambling mess. His cross-examinations frequently backfired. (It was he, for example, not the prosecution, who revealed that only several dozen pairs of the Aris Isotoner light brown extra-large gloves found at the scene of the murder had been sold in this country, of which O.J. Simpson owned two.) He vowed to produce several witnesses who never appeared, promised to adduce proofs of innocence he never proved, and in general presented a case that would certainly have lost before any jury not chosen for its prejudices and its ignorance.

Was, then, the prosecution unusually incompetent, as Jeffrey Toobin argues in *The Run of His Life*, and as Vincent Bugliosi argues more stridently in *Outrage: The Five Reasons Why O.J. Simpson Got Away With Murder*?[5] Not really: Marcia Clark boasted a sterling record as a prosecutor and had tremendous resources at her disposal. The notion that one of her subordinates would have done better than she is so much wishful thinking, and also quite wrongly implies that our justice system can work only if the forces of good are paragons of forensic skill.

Nor, for that matter, was Lance Ito an exceptionally poor judge who did an exceptionally bad job of responding to the Simpson team's demagoguery. Essentially, Ito is an average jurist: in the words of the late Diana Trilling, "an archetypal product of our present-day progressive culture." But, as Toobin points out, Ito has also proved more willing than many judges to allow incriminating evidence into court, and, all things considered, has been more resistant to racial radicalism than most. He is, after all, Republican-appointed and married to the highest-ranking woman in the Los Angeles police department.

If the argument that Simpson enjoyed superior legal talent is finally inadequate to explain the verdict, a somewhat more fruitful line has been taken by the legal writer Jeffrey Rosen in a powerful essay in the *New Republic*.[6] Rosen, who was quite openly appalled by the racialized atmosphere of the trial, and who understands that these days such racialism is not confined to the courtroom, has nevertheless tried to quarantine it intellectually within the margins of a fashionable academic movement known as "critical legal studies." He professes amazement that such heretofore "mainstream" legal scholars as Leon Higginbotham have embraced this new theory, which holds, in essence, that the entire American notion of justice is but a construct of the white ruling class, a means of perpetuating its "hegemony"—and that the job of criticism is to unmask the power interests lurking underneath such artificial and arbitrary categories as "guilt" and "innocence." Thanks to the triumph of such pernicious doctrines in our law schools, Rosen laments, "Colorblindness is waning in prestige, and not only among blacks."

This is a start, but only a start. For "critical legal studies" is not something new and different; it is just another name for the intellectualization of our *normal* system of race relations. Colorblindness, moreover, is not "waning in prestige"; its prestige, certainly among many blacks, has long been nonexistent. When, a month before the verdict, Johnnie Cochran rose to accept an award at the Soul Train Lady of Soul Awards, the entire black elite of the Los Angeles entertainment world—that is, the most highly educated and privileged black elite in the country—rose as one

[4] Morrow, 265 pp., $24.00.

[5] Norton, 365 pp., $25.00.

[6] "The Bloods and the Crits," December 9, 1996.

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to chant, "Free O.J., Free O.J.!" The fears voiced immediately after the February 4 verdict in Simpson's civil trial—namely, that the "whiteness" of that jury might undermine the verdict's "legitimacy" and spark black violence—suggest how few Americans still believe colorblindness exists among blacks, except perhaps as a pious dogma.

And where, for that matter, has colorblindness found defenders among whites of Rosen's own political persuasion? Less than a year ago, he himself was taking to the pages of the *New Republic* to condemn the idea behind Proposition 209, California's ballot referendum outlawing preferential discrimination, as "radical" colorblindness.

As it happens, that "radical" colorblindness is the colorblindness that was written into the Civil Rights Acts of the 1960's, and that is grounded firmly in the country's political and constitutional principles. But starting in the late 1960's this same colorblindness came to be repudiated by the liberal elites who were even then busily constructing the regime of "racial fairness" under which we have been living for the last 25 years. The new racialism that is embraced by American society outside the courtroom—under the name of multiculturalism, affirmative action, and other, similar forms of institutionalized double standards—is what bred the inside-the-courtroom racism of the Simpson criminal trial. The habits of discourse over which many liberals are now wringing their hands were not the inventions of Johnnie Cochran.

DOES THE verdict in the civil trial offer hope of a change, or at least suggest that the picture may be more complicated? To his lasting credit, Hiroshi Fujisaki, the judge in the civil trial, kept race out of his courtroom. But it must be remembered that he had to go to extraordinary lengths to do so, and some legal commentators have warned that his rulings on race—such as his refusal to admit questions about Mark Fuhrman's anti-black statements—might make the verdict in his court vulnerable to an appeal.

It was, in any event, in the criminal-justice arena that the main drama of this case—a case of murder, after all—was necessarily played out. And there, "the race card"—the idea that blacks, having been especially oppressed, are entitled to special privileges—was not dealt "from the very bottom of the deck." Race was stamped on every card in the deck. Nor did racial doublethink enter the courtroom as an illegitimate argument. It entered as a legitimate argument—more, as an unanswerable argument. Once asserted by the defense, it was accepted by judge, jury, press, and prosecution—by some eagerly, by some uneasily, by all tacitly. And why not? It is, by now, the core principle of our reigning racial ideology. O.J. Simpson's trial for the murder of his wife and her friend merely tested its logic to the utmost, and found it sound.

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How Not to Deal With China

Arthur Waldron

SOONER OR later, if present trends continue without change, war is probable in Asia. Yet neither the United States nor its allies have begun to get serious enough about what will be required to prevent it.

Like Europe at the turn of this century, Asia today is a region of increasingly strong nation-states: populous, economically dynamic, and militarily ever more capable. But at the same time, Asia sorely lacks an adequate structure of security. That weakness was less worrying in the early 1990's, when most Asian countries were preoccupied with economic development and the American military presence in the region was still at cold-war levels. But over the past two years, tensions in the region have risen appreciably, while post-cold-war hopes of regional comity have faded, leaving order, such as it is, to rest weakly on a handful of bilateral security treaties with the United States. In the meantime, for each of the Asian nation-states, China has become a major concern.

A QUICK tour of the horizon should suffice to show the shakiness of the present situation. Japan, the potential superpower of the region, is for the time being curiously on the political sidelines. Rich, democratic, and free, Japan is also an object of deep regional distrust on account of the atrocities committed by its militarist regime more than 50 years ago—and for which, indeed, very little genuine repentance has been evident. For Asia as a whole, the relation between Japan and China is of pivotal importance, comparable to that of France and Germany in Europe; but worrisome signs in the last year include a dramatic stepping-up of anti-Japanese rhetoric in China's official media, while on another front overseas Chinese in Taiwan and Hong Kong have actively confronted Japan over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands in the East China Sea, over which Beijing claims absolute sovereignty.

Korea is probably approaching the close of its tragic period of postwar division—although it remains to be seen whether that close will be peaceful or accompanied by catastrophic collapse in the North and floods of refugees. Here again China is deeply involved, for it is the closest thing North Korea has to a great-power friend, while to the South it can be an economic partner and also, potentially, an ally against Japan. China pays a great deal of attention to Seoul, and may even expect unification to lead to an end to Seoul's security relationship with the United States, with the latter's place being taken by Beijing.

As for Taiwan, it is still shadowed by the Chi-

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nese civil war of the 1940's, now continuing in a new form. Meanwhile, the ongoing process of democratization, in a country with complex Chinese, Japanese, and indigenous inheritances, raises in acute form the question of the island's place in the world. Will there be an internationally acknowledged Taiwanese state? China, for one, says that it will use force if necessary to prevent its emergence.

Then there is Southeast Asia, which, having weathered the Vietnam war and a variety of domestic insurgencies, and having moved onto the track of prosperity, shows no desire to complicate matters with political headaches. Fault lines nevertheless remain, and not least between the numerous and disproportionately successful ethnic Chinese and other inhabitants. And here again China is a looming worry. Beijing's claim of "unquestionable sovereignty" over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea and its recent seizure of one of them, Mischief Reef, also claimed by the Philippines, have alarmed Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei, and rattled Indonesia, which asserts its right to gas fields nearby.

India and South Asia, long preoccupied with their own internal rivalries and content with their rates of growth, now look with envy and some concern as East Asia opens an ever-increasing lead in economics, military power, and general global clout. Indian and Chinese forces still face each other in the high mountains of their disputed border, as they have done since their war in 1962. Pakistan to the west is a key Chinese ally, and beyond, in the Middle East, China is reportedly supplying arms to Syria, Iraq, and Iran. To the north, Tibet (whose government-in-exile has been based in India since 1959) is currently the object of a vicious Chinese crackdown. And a new issue between India and China is Beijing's alliance with Rangoon and its reported military or intelligence-gathering presence on offshore Burmese territories near the Indian naval base in the Andaman Islands.

Finally there is Russia, which has key interests in Asia. Sidelined by domestic problems, but only temporarily, Moscow has repeatedly faced China in this century, both in the northeast and along the Mongolian border. The break-up of the Soviet Union has added a potentially volatile factor in the newly independent states of Central Asia and Chinese-controlled Xinjiang (Sinkiang), where Beijing is currently fighting a low-level counter-insurgency.

Making these flash-points all the more volatile has been a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of China's weapons acquisitions. An Asian arms race of sorts was already gathering steam in the post-cold-war era, driven by national rivalries and the understandable desire of newly rich nation-states to upgrade their capacities; but the Chinese build-up has intensified it. In part a payoff to the military for its role at Tiananmen Square in 1989, China's current build-up is part and parcel of the regime's major shift since that time away from domestic liberalization and international openness toward repression and irredentism.

Today China buys weapons from European states and Israel, but most importantly from Russia. The latest multibillion-dollar deal includes two *Sovremenny*-class destroyers equipped with the much-feared SS-N-22 cruise missile, capable of defeating the Aegis anti-missile defenses of the U.S. Navy and thus sinking American aircraft carriers. This is in addition to the Su-27 fighter aircraft, quiet Kilo-class submarines, and other force-projection and deterrent technologies. In turn, the Asian states are buying or developing their own advanced aircraft, missiles, and submarines—and considering nuclear options.

The sort of unintended escalation which started two world wars could arise from any of the conflicts around China's periphery. It nearly did so in March 1996, when China, in a blatant act of intimidation, fired ballistic missiles in the Taiwan Straits. It could arise from a Chinese-Vietnamese confrontation, particularly if the Vietnamese should score some unexpected military successes against the Chinese, as they did in 1979, and if the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which they are now a member, should tip in the direction of Hanoi. It could flare up from the smoldering insurgencies among Tibetans, Muslims, or Mongolians living inside China. Chains of alliance or interest, perhaps not clearly understood until the moment of crisis itself, could easily draw in neighboring states—Russia, or India, or Japan—or the United States.

Such potentially catastrophic conflict is hardly predestined, and political evolution in China may reduce the danger. But right now there is little sign of such evolution. Quite the opposite: the words and deeds of today's China manifest a strengthening sense that resort to force will be necessary to achieve its goals, and a growing confidence that force can be used successfully.

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IN THE light of all these developments, official U.S. thinking on China seems distinctly out of joint. That thinking was laid out by former Secretary of State Warren Christopher in May 1996 at a combined session of the Asia Society, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations:

> We strongly support China's development as a secure, open, and successful nation that is taking its place as a world leader. China has an important and constructive role to play in the coming century—and we welcome it. The United States and China share many interests that can only be served when our two countries deal constructively and openly with each other. By deepening China's integration into the international system, we can best ensure that China's development as a strong and responsible member of the international community promotes our interests as well as its own.

This, in brief, is the rationale for Washington's new policy of "constructive engagement," which foresees a role for China not only as a partner of the United States but as the potential keystone of a whole new Asian security structure. To be sure, Christopher's seemingly bland optimism was carefully hedged at key points. He noted that "we do not have any illusions about the difficulty of managing our relations during this period of dramatic change and transition in China," and affirmed that "we will not hesitate to take action necessary to protect our interests." Nevertheless, the message was unmistakable—and would, moreover, be familiar to any student of the history of U.S.-Chinese relations.

For this was the same message that was heard in this country in the 1920's and again in the 1940's, when Franklin D. Roosevelt identified China as the future policeman of the region and assigned it a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. In its standard version, the message begins by acknowledging the many difficulties of the past and present, but looks toward their resolution; with a glance at China's vast potential, it urges everyone (in Christopher's words) to "focus on the long term"; and in the face of blunt demands, it counsels that we "seek to resolve our differences through engagement, not confrontation." Just as with the Soviet Union during the cold war, there is a powerful school of thought in Washington according to which gentle treatment will elicit good behavior, while firmness risks an escalating counterreaction. Or, as James Baker once put it, "the best way to make an enemy is to look for one." By refraining from acts of needless "provocation," we can look forward to the day when China will have come into its own as a responsible and stabilizing force in Asia, with the United States as its close friend.

The issue here, however, is not whether Christopher's scenario is desirable, but whether it is realistic. Realism tells us that China has always been big and important, and that conflict with China is dangerous. But the policy of "constructive engagement" which Christopher outlined, and which is the hallmark of current Clinton-administration policy, rests on the notion that China is, or is on the brink of becoming, a status-quo power, seeking peace and free trade. As we have seen, and as a stream of analysis has steadily maintained, the facts suggest otherwise; they suggest that China is instead a revisionist power, seeking to extend its sovereignty far beyond what it effectively exercises today.*

FOR A cautionary guide to the present situation, it is useful to look at another, earlier attempt to bring China into the international system. At the Washington Conference of 1921-22, the assembled powers—American, European, and Asian—sought to discard the "treaty system" inherited from the imperialist past and to substitute a multilateral concert of nations for the bilateral Anglo-Japanese alliance which had hitherto been the sheet anchor of Asian stability. The idea, then as now, was to install China as a key structural component of an emerging Asian order.

Almost immediately, however, the effort ran up against a number of problems; although a new system was indeed devised in Washington, within a decade war had broken out between Japan and China in Manchuria, and the nations were left to react to it without even the semblance of a coordinated strategy. Among the problems revealed in Washington were some enduring traits of Chinese diplomatic behavior, all manifestations of China's revisionist stance toward the political status quo.

The first of these traits—which still distinguish the Chinese approach to diplomacy—was a studied vagueness about territorial claims. Thus, in 1920, a fundamental issue was where China's legitimate boundaries lay: precisely the issue that today, in 1997, is threatening stability in a long

* For the most recent account, see the important new book by Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict With China*, Knopf, 224 pp., $23.00.

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arc around the People's Republic. Then as now, China insisted on absolute respect for its territorial integrity and sovereignty—while studiously avoiding clarity as to its absolute extent. Today, maps of the People's Republic include Taiwan and the South China Sea and the Senkaku Islands—none of which China controls—and China is involved in disputes with neighbors around the full circumference of its border, disputes which, like burners on a stove, Beijing may turn up or down, but never turns off.

A second trait has to do with what might be called diplomatic closure. Businessmen today regularly observe that negotiations begin in China only *after* the contract is signed. The same problem was visible at the Washington Conference in the early 1920's. There, the Chinese attitude contrasted markedly with the negotiating mode of the Japanese, who not only were willing to abandon certain claims and military positions in return for security guarantees but sought (unsuccessfully) a crystal-clear statement of their relationship with the other signatories. Nor was the Chinese approach simply a matter of style; at its basis was (and is) a fundamental rejection of the binding power of treaties over more than the near term.

At the Washington Conference, the most difficult moment came over Japan's rights, secured by a number of legally valid if "unequal" treaties with China, to a "special position" in Manchuria. Some guarantee of these was an irreducible requirement for Japan, but binding language was unacceptable to China. The craftsmen, whose numbers included a brilliant group of Chinese diplomats, came up with a formula that was presented to Japan as an implicit guarantee of Japanese interests, and accepted as such. As far as the Chinese were concerned, however, it was no such thing.

Which brings us to a third trait—namely, the use of force, or the threat of force, as a tool in diplomacy.

Chinese politics post-Washington proved unexpectedly chaotic. In the fall of 1924, even as the well-informed American minister Jacob Gould Schurmann was telling President Coolidge that "China is improving every day," conflicts broke out within the Chinese leadership; the government in Beijing that had concluded the agreements collapsed, and was soon overthrown by the insurgent Kuomintang or Nationalist party. The powers that had assembled in Washington discovered not only that the problems they had met to solve had not been solved, but that China was now making new demands, backed by threats. Should those threats be squarely rejected? Or might it not be possible to give China some leeway in the interests of harmony and improved economic relations? In the event, leeway was given, and so was unrecoverable ground.

Such was the fatal temptation then, and such is the fatal temptation today. Once "engagement" becomes the policy, success comes to be measured not by how well a given response deters Chinese aggressiveness, or meets American or allied interests, but by whether or not it reduces the level of Chinese threats and complaints. Instead of asking what are our own interests, and those of our allies, we ask what the Chinese want, and how close we can come to providing it. By such steps does our "engagement" with them, now as in the 1920's, turn into their cooptation of us.

The clearest recent example of this process at work occurred in the brief but alarming crisis in the Taiwan Straits in March 1996. What precipitated the crisis was the simple, perennial fact that Taiwan's status had not been resolved—and that the chances of settlement on Beijing's terms were coming to seem increasingly remote. Notwithstanding the "expectations" of a "peaceful solution" to the issue, embodied in basic documents of the relationship, China, just as in the 1920's, began to look to force as a way out. In the revealing words of President Jiang Zemin to the *Asahi Shimbun* of Tokyo on August 12, 1995, "If we abandon the threat of force against Taiwan, then it is not possible that peaceful reunification will be achieved."

In keeping with this Delphic pronouncement, what China required was a military measure that would cow an increasingly independent-minded Taiwan without drawing a military response from the United States; better, it needed a crisis that could be contained, but that would also pressure the U.S. to take action at Taiwan's expense in order to "maintain the relationship" with Beijing. "Testing" ballistic missiles seemed to fit the bill, so twice Beijing carried out firings: well offshore in summer 1995, and then, in March 1996, so close to Taiwan's two chief ports as effectively to constitute a blockade.

The potential efficacy of this strategy was by no means limited to Taiwan: it could be used against any of the nonnuclear states bordering China. Since no defense exists against the sort of ballistic missiles China fired, even if Washington

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or another power sought to help, nothing practical could be done short of a dramatic and highly risky escalation. And indeed this is the key to China's overall military strategy: not so much to reform or rebuild its force structures (that is too difficult and too slow a process) as to seek decisive advantage in certain areas sufficient to achieve policy goals. By this means, China today is actively seeking to scare the United States away from East Asia rather as Germany sought to frighten Britain before World War I by building its famous "risk fleet."

In March 1996, China's ploy seemed to fail. But did it? Washington sent two carrier battle groups to the area, and the crisis abated. Yet the administration also offered rewards: a visit by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake to Beijing (his first) and some further, still secret, commitments. (According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, they included a delay in delivery of U.S. F-16's purchased by Taiwan.) Diplomatic alchemy thus transmuted tension into good will—sealed by the pledge of an exchange of visits by Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton.

HOW, THEN, does the future of Asian security look in light of these considerations? To be blunt about it, the most important lesson is that China cannot be a keystone of an East Asian security order. Rather, it is a source of problems that such an order must be designed in part, and at least for the time being, to prevent.

In Asia, China today confronts no existing collective alliance or entente, and its diplomacy has sought with great success to keep things that way. Beijing cultivates bilateral relationships—with Japan, with South Korea, with the United States, with Russia, and so forth—each trailing its own history and its own particular characteristics, many of them mutually incompatible. Where other alliances exist, China attempts to break them, for instance by pressuring Japan not to strengthen its ties with Washington, or by lavishing diplomatic attention on Seoul (which notoriously distrusts Japan). Often the United States unwittingly falls into line, paying far more deference to China, a possible adversary, than to allies and friends.

For China, the purpose of this relentless splitting is first to remove restraints on its own actions, and then to create from the scattered pieces a system that will serve and promote China's goals. This again is not new: in the 1920's and 1930's, though far weaker both economically and militarily than it is today, China nevertheless managed first to divide the various Western powers and then to isolate Japan (whose tie to Britain had been broken at the Washington Conference). But there are also big differences between then and now, and therein lies our opportunity.

China today is more critically dependent on the rest of the world than at any time since 1949. It is a paradoxical fact that its ambitions for regional authority and its territorial irredentism can be realized only with active regional and, especially, American acquiescence and cooperation. Cuts in capital flows from Asia would be a huge problem for China; a hostile United States would be catastrophic. China's economy would wilt if North American markets were closed, and its military position would become precarious if its neighbors actively allied against it with the United States.

These facts provide the key to policy. What is needed is some sort of strategic coordination among the major states dealing with China, and those around its periphery, in order to manage the China-associated problems with which they are all faced. That structure could well be something short of a formal alliance. Its basic purpose would be to consult on economic, military, and political issues; to attempt to gain, in dealing with China, the advantages conferred by a common front; and to deter.

Admittedly, this is a very tall order. China is good at pitting Boeing against Airbus, dangling contracts, exerting diplomatic pressure. But one hopeful sign is that some type of coordination is already on the horizon, most notably among Washington, Tokyo, and the Southeast Asian states. In the past twelve months, the U.S.-Japan security alliance has been reaffirmed by both sides, and Japan is currently seeking closer relations with ASEAN (in the teeth of rhetorical barrages from Beijing about revived Japanese militarism and the horrors of World War II). American ties with Southeast Asian states and Australia have also been strengthened. Rumors fly of a coming U.S. naval visit to Vietnam, and perhaps even a presidential trip as well. Patriot missiles have been secretly delivered to Taiwan, and Taiwanese pilots are in the U.S., training with soon-to-be delivered F-16's. Military connections with Indonesia and India are being improved. Consultations among the Asian states themselves are also increasing.

This activity is all to the good, and should be helped to grow. To it should be added a sustained effort to control Chinese access to the most mod-

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ern military technology, currently being supplied by Russia, the European states, Israel, and others. And the effort to coordinate a deterrent policy might also be expanded to include European states and Russia. It is altogether mysterious why, in Europe, America is being urged by NATO expansionists to establish, against a weak and reforming Russia, a deterrent even more broadly based than during the cold war, while in Asia we are being urged to give a pass to an increasingly strong China which rejects political reform.

What sorts of costs would a coordinated policy seek to impose? Militarily, proportionate responses designed to balance Beijing's military moves are essential, with the key being defense against China's prime lever: missiles. Politically, intimidation must be shown not to work; in particular, the United States should never seem to be making concessions to China in response to threats as it did in 1996 after the missile crisis.

But coordination could extend to economic policies as well. Access to foreign markets is what provides the funds for China's military build-up, and China itself regularly uses economic measures to achieve political ends. Does it make sense for the rest of the world simply to trade, without considering the consequences? Instead, trade should be linked to the behavior of Chinese firms or organizations that violate intellectual property rights, or are involved with the military or security system, or employ slave labor. Why should we pay for domestic repression in China, or for the development of capacities intended to be used against us and our friends in the region?

Finally, the difficult question of Taiwan should also be on the table for discussion, despite what Beijing thinks or says. The island will have a future, and it will almost certainly not be the one China currently demands. Strategic and military steps are required to close the window of Taiwan's apparent vulnerability.

Arguments like this one tend to elicit a patronizing response in Washington these days, to the effect that China must not be isolated, or that calling China an enemy can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. But the shoe is on the other foot. "Engagement" without deterrence will reinforce the current Chinese leadership, which seeks to stay in power by substituting a policy of national prestige abroad and repression at home for genuine reform. As long as Beijing can reap dividends from this approach, by pressuring and threatening its neighbors and the United States without adverse consequences, it will surely continue on its present path.

By contrast, a coordinated policy that imposed costs on Beijing might well have a greater chance of success. Such an approach would cut the ground out from under Chinese hard-liners and restore credibility to the reformers and would-be democratizers, of whom there is no shortage. As was the case earlier in this century for Germany, for Japan, and for Russia, the only enduring solution to the threat posed by China is a change in the regime, in the direction of political democracy. That possibility may be closer than we tend to think. But "engagement" alone will no more do the job than appeasement did in the case of Germany, or détente in the case of the USSR.

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Intermarriage, Inc.

Wendy Shalit

For a number of years now, books have been available for American Jewish children which reflect simultaneously on Christmas and Hanukkah. In days not *quite* beyond recall, the authors of such books would take pains to stress the importance of Jews remaining Jews—showing, for instance, how a Jewish child could rejoice in the holiday season without celebrating Christmas, or how a Jewish parent could preserve the integrity of Judaism without feeling like a Scrooge.

Thus, Kathryn Lasky's *Pageant* (1986) portrayed a Jewish girl who revolts against playing a shepherd in her school's annual Christmas drama. Similarly, in Eric A. Kimmel's *The Hanukkah Tree* (1987) we learn that "only in Chelm" (a fictitious city comprising stupid Jews) could a peddler get away with selling such a non sequitur as a Hanukkah tree, while in Barbara Cohen's *The Christmas Revolution* (1987) the young hero and heroine opt out of caroling to put on a play about the Maccabees. And in Susan Sussman's *There's No Such Thing as a Hanukkah Bush, Sandy Goldstein* (1986), the young Jewish protagonist finds the lines drawn very clearly by her mother:

> "Can we have a Hanukkah bush?" I asked softly. I felt warm tears float up into my eyes.
>
> "There is no such thing," she said. Her knitting needles clicked quickly. I pushed the candles around some more. I decided to try again.
>
> "But Sandy Goldstein has. . . ."
>
> "What Sandy Goldstein has is a Christmas tree. And you know Jews do not believe in Christmas."

Admittedly, Judaism in these books is a rather empty sort of religion, basically reduced to that which is not-Christian. At least, though, a child a decade ago would have gleaned from them a sense that Judaism was in fact different from Christianity; that this difference might matter; and that it might matter enough to require taking a stand.

Yet those were still the days when the full force of Jewish intermarriage patterns had not yet registered on the consciousness of American book publishers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Today, if the statistics are to be believed, more Jews are marrying Christians than Jews, and the stories on offer to the actual or prospective children of such unions have been suitably updated to reflect the new reality. In brief, where effort was once directed at justifying the costs of a necessary difference, now it is directed at celebrating the rewards of a mindless amalgamation.

For example, Susan Gertz's *Hanukkah and Christmas at My House* (1992) and Margaret Moorman's *Light the Lights! A Story about Cele-*

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brating Hanukkah & Christmas (1994) ask what it is like to grow up in a home where both Judaism and Christianity are practiced. The answer: children get to have double the fun. They can make latkes *and* spicy gingerbread; they can light the menorah *and* decorate the Christmas tree; they can tell the story of the Maccabees *and* the story of baby Jesus. Best of all, they get twice as many presents.

From the point of view of anyone even mildly concerned about the future of Judaism (or, for that matter, Christianity), this portrait of religion as basically so much candy in a candy box may be worrisome enough. But in some quarters of the new dispensation, something more aggressive and even more troubling seems to be developing, and it has been made a little clearer in this past year's crop of interfaith children's books.

Consider Joan C. Hawxhurst's *Bubbe and Gram: My Two Grandmothers*,* which follows the daily routine of a young girl as she learns what it means to be Jewish and Christian at the same time.

"My dad's mother is Jewish. I call her Bubbe. My mom's mother is Christian. I call her Gram." So begins a fascinating tale of alternating faiths. For every mezuzah of Bubbe's, Gram has a picture of Jesus; for every story about baby Moses who "saw miracles happen," there is Gram's story about Jesus and how he, too, "saw miracles happen." When Bubbe ups the ante, Gram matches her, bet for bet. Bubbe coaxes the little one to play *dreidel* with her at Hanukkah time, but she is all Gram's at Christmas, when she is allowed to "play with the little stable with baby Jesus inside." "Sometimes Bubbe says the *Shema* out loud to me"; "sometimes Gram says the Lord's Prayer out loud to me."

So far, so vanilla. Wonder of wonders, moreover, both Bubbe and Gram assure their granddaughter of their serene indifference to the fact that she is being simultaneously exposed to a second set of choices, and their no less serene acceptance of any decision she will eventually make between them: theirs is a sporting competition. *But wait*: although the text does scrupulously take turns, now Bubbe, now Gram, now Gram, now Bubbe, the illustrations are another matter. Gram, it emerges, is lithe and slender, Bubbe short and fat; while Gram sports not a trace of gray in her fashionably bobbed do, and wears sexy stretch pants and attractive zippered jackets, Bubbe has frizzled gray hair and spectacles, and is clothed in a frumpy yellow house-dress. Down to the details, Gram does better, her high heels and briefcase contrasting sharply with Bubbe's ancient tennis shoes and huge old-lady handbag. In brief, Bubbe, who looks 40 years older than Gram, could be Gram's Bubbe.

These wildly inequitable pictures reach out through the cloying narrative to tell a different and perhaps truer story. The author of *Bubbe and Gram* is a Methodist, married to a Jew. Can it be that what reason forbids, emotion has permitted her (through the medium of an illustrator) to do: namely, to make a direct visual appeal to her own child? "Pick me," say the illustrations, "pick *me*!" And who in his right mind would not?

SOME SUCH message appears to be conveyed not only in children's stories but by at least one segment of a growing industry catering to the phenomenon of interfaith marriage. According to a recent account in the weekly *Forward*, "a wellspring of new products and services is bubbling up to meet the needs of this burgeoning market," now estimated at about 1 million households with about 1.3 million children. Among the products are special holiday greeting cards, special certificates "designed to imitate a *ketuba*" (Jewish marriage contract), special newsletters, even special trips to Israel. Particularly active in the industry is a company called Dovetail Publishing, responsible (as it happens) not only for *Bubbe and Gram* but also for a bimonthly interfaith magazine named, appropriately enough, *Dovetail*, and a book, *Interfaith Wedding Ceremonies: Samples and Sources*,† to be followed later this year by *Interfaith Naming Ceremonies*.

Interfaith Wedding Ceremonies turns out to share more with *Bubbe and Gram* than the same author and publisher. In its pages we learn that each and every intermarriage broadens "the circle of love and understanding in this world." If so, however, it is only by a willingness not merely to falsify the differences between Judaism and Christianity but radically to distort the entire history of their relations. Thus, in one "sample" wedding ceremony, a priest tells Karen and Dan:

> One of the most blatant denials of [the divine] image has been the enmity between Jews and Christians. There has been hatred and rancor and spite and almost everything else between Christians and Jews—almost everything else except love. Your marriage is a

* Illustrated by Jane Bynum-Nwulu. Dovetail Publishing, 32 pp., $12.95.

† Selected and with an introduction by Joan C. Hawxhurst. Dovetail Publishing, 93 pp., $19.95.

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small and yet gigantic step in the reversal of that trend . . . a sign, a very precious sign, that nothing—not even 2,000 years of enmity—is stronger than love.

One does not know whether to laugh or to cry at this portrait of mutual and reciprocal persecution: are we now to expect revisionist histories of the Crusades, of the Spanish Inquisition, and all the rest, with the Jews on the offensive against hapless Christian minorities? It would be easier to laugh if there were not, in fact, rabbis who, in their zeal to defer to the intermarrying tide, have begun to issue what look suspiciously like apologies for Jewish existence—if not, quite yet, for millennia of alleged Jewish crimes against Christianity. *Interfaith Wedding Ceremonies* provides a glimpse into the souls of such rabbis, one of whom reminds us how important it is to be "warm" and "inclusive" rather than "exclusive"—exclusivity being defined in this context as wedding practices that can offend those "put off by the Hebrew" or by anything else that might once have been considered to express the heart of Judaism.

WHAT, THEN, passes for a suitably "warm" and "inclusive" ceremony? Well, Nancy and Harry, for example, had a priest officiate at their wedding: no Hebrew, certainly, but a sprinkling of "songs from *Fiddler on the Roof*" (presumably not the one that goes, "who would've thought that I'd be wandering so, far from the home I loved?"). Helen and Tom had just a minister, while Kathryn and Lance went for a minister-rabbi team, under a *huppah* (canopy) with a large brass cross next to it; in the interests of "inclusiveness," Lance, the Jewish groom, saw to it that no liturgical references were made to the Jewish attachment to Zion. As for Patricia and David, they had a priest and a rabbi, "unity candles," one prayer of St. Francis, and seven wedding blessings, matching those recited at a Jewish wedding in number but most assuredly not in content.

In the bimonthly *Dovetail*, too, Judaism comes across less as an equal contender than as the (compliant) object of a friendly takeover. While the magazine's official position is "that there are no definitive answers to the questions facing interfaith families," nondefinitiveness always seems to end up favoring Christianity. Not that the Jews involved seem particularly conscious of the fact; for them, nondefinitiveness is the name of the game. Here is David Howard, who is married to a Catholic Hispanic and who chairs the education program for a Jewish community in Ojai, California:

To be a Jew *and* a Christian you needn't resolve the mysteries of the Holy Trinity or accept Jesus as your own personal savior, or on the other hand accept some Orthodox *halakhic* point of view; you only have to live your life involved in both communities. You may or may not have a bar/bat mitzvah, keep kosher or take communion; you even may or may not believe in God.

And here is Oscar A. Rosenbloom, cantor of an "interfaith community" in Palo Alto, who has composed his own prayer for the harvest festival of Sukkot:

Adonoi, . . .
Some of us gather as the
Children of Israel.
Some of us gather in the name of
Jesus.
Some of us gather without either
of these identities.
Some of us gather influenced by
each.
Howsoever we come
And whomsoever [*sic*] we are
May we be moved
In our time together
To experience the Sense of
Divine Presence in Each of Us
As we seek to know
And to relate to
The Many Meanings Carried
In the Rituals We Celebrate.

Just as with *Bubbe and Gram*, however, *some* of the "Many Meanings Carried/In the Rituals We Celebrate" turn out to have rather a sting in their dovetail. Thus, Reverend David Matthew, a Presbyterian minister, tells us (*Dovetail*, February-March 1996) what he likes most about interfaith worship. It is that Christians, through their new proximity to Jews, can be warned against human habits to which they, too, are susceptible: "Are there no Christian Pharisees? Are there no Christian legalists out there. . . ?" For their part, Reverend Matthew goes on, Jews can be reminded that "Paul was himself a Jew, a Pharisee, a legalist, who turned to Jesus in the middle of his life, and then found himself being sent to prison by the Jewish leaders. . . ."

In a similar if somewhat less noxious vein, a set of guidelines for interfaith worship "developed

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through a cooperative effort of the National Council of Churches and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations," and reprinted in the August-September 1996 *Dovetail*, recommends *against* "pointedly Jewish prayers" in interfaith services but *for* "the nonpolemical use of Jesus' name and teachings in readings from Christian scriptures." And in the same issue of *Dovetail*, the celebrants at an interfaith Thanksgiving service interrupt their main order of business—"Gracious God, give us the power . . . to recycle our waste, . . . to build more fuel-efficient means of transportation, to develop environmentally safe sources of fuel and power. . . . Hear our prayer"—to proclaim that although "we are all part of one global village," it is especially distressing that "Palestinians continue to suffer under the occupation of Israel." Hear our prayer.

WHICH BRINGS us back to the precursors to today's interfaith books for children. There was, to be sure, much to criticize in them—most especially, the notion that Judaism defines itself primarily by what it is not. In retrospect, one might say that a Judaism so flimsy that it could only think to object to singing Christmas carols in school was not a Judaism armed against the lure of the intermarriage canopy. But who could have guessed that so few years would pass before there would be reason to yearn for the simple, stunning clarity of *There's No Such Thing as a Hanukkah Bush, Sandy Goldstein*?

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MOVIES

The Witches of Arthur Miller

Midge Decter

IN 1950, Arthur Miller began to think about writing *The Crucible*, a play whose ostensible subject was the Salem witch trials of 1692. In 1953 the work was brought to Broadway. As the period of its creation—the early 50's—would suggest, however, the play itself had little to do with events of the 17th century and everything to do with its author's anguish over a then-current American political phenomenon known by the collective name of McCarthyism.

The story concerns a group of young Puritan girls who are caught in a forbidden act, i.e., dancing and cavorting in the woods. In order to evade punishment, the girls accuse an ever-growing number of their neighbors of having bewitched them; in turn, the powers-that-be, acting out of a variety of motives not excluding plain greed and envy, declare their belief in the girls' claims. The result is that virtually the entire village is plunged into a hysteria about witches. The only way the accused can save themselves from the gallows is by confessing to having engaged in witchcraft, by naming names of others so engaged, and by begging to receive God's light once again. By play's end—this detail is in keeping with the historical record—nineteen innocents have been hanged.

Though the state of mind of the real Salemites must finally remain something of a mystery—some scholars impute the events of 1692 to Puritan fervor, others to an outbreak of pagan rebellion *against* that fervor—it is not difficult to understand how Arthur Miller found in the hysteria that overtook Salem a useful parallel to America's preoccupation with the activities and influence of the country's alleged Communists, some few of whom had stood firm in the face of congressional pressure while many others gave way. But why write about long-ago people being hanged as witches rather than about those who had actually been called before congressional committees?

For one thing, of course, many of those called to testify about their knowledge of, or participation in, Communist activities were in fact guilty as charged, and this would have greatly complicated the playwright's ambition to stir onlookers to unalloyed pity and terror—the more so since punishment for such activities, when it was meted out at all, was merely pecuniary in nature. For another thing, despite having in his own person known the "dead weight of . . . fear," as he has put it in a recent issue of the *New Yorker*, even Arthur Miller might by 1953 have found the figure of Joseph McCarthy a bit flimsy to bear the weight he wished to put on it; indeed, not long after the play's premiere the Eisenhower administration permanently put paid both to the Senator himself and to his efforts. By contrast, the Salem Puritans, long gone as they were, could be made to stand conveniently and permanently for any and all of the world's sinned-against and sinners.

Whatever the reason for Miller's interest in Salem, though, it is hard to believe that audiences have ever really been moved by this play. Like all literary works deprived of the

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courage of their particularity, *The Crucible* is so smothered in its unrevealed purposes that it can barely breathe. Except for certain confected idiosyncrasies of speech, the 17th-century Salem evoked in the play might be anywhere, or rather nowhere. And as for the characters, they are too busy embodying their respective forms of innocence or guilt to hear themselves think. This is the sort of work from which America's good and earnest playgoers emerge into the lobby at intermission nodding gravely and intoning the word "powerful"—meaning that they have been called upon to feel uplifted.

Still, moving or not, the play has been kept very much alive over the years, and has been brought to the stage many times and in a variety of places. Perhaps this is not so surprising, given the propensity of the established theatrical world to genuflect before whatever announces itself as a statement, however airless, about the brutalizing of the helpless at the hands of authority. What *does* surprise is how benign an effect has been exercised on the play by having it step out of the theater and surrender, as it has now done, to Hollywood.

The movie version of *The Crucible* has been produced by Twentieth Century-Fox, directed by Nicholas Hytner, and written by Miller himself. As he informs us in his preface to the published screenplay,* Miller always believed that films were of a lower order than plays—a craft, rather than an art—and so for a long time he successfully resisted translating his dramas to the screen. Moreover, movies in his view are more suited to novels, which shift from place to place and time to time in a way that can leave a play "creaking and groaning." And, perhaps especially, movies, like novels, do not necessarily depend on dialogue, whereas plays do totally. "The play," he says, in a revealing critical comment on his own didactic purposes as a dramatist, "wants to tell"; "the movie [wants] to show."

Although we never really learn what finally convinced Miller to take *The Crucible* in hand and transform himself from artist to craftsman, from the standpoint of the play his decision has been, to say the least, a salutary one. Translated to film, Salem at last becomes a *place*, not a "setting," and, no matter how much talk is put into their mouths, the people who live in Salem do not only speak at one another—or, worse, at the audience—they do such things as dance and work and stride through muddy streets and exchange looks and wet their feet in the sea, and, when called upon, climb into carts and step up to the gallows. In other words, they come alive as Miller's characters on stage almost never do, and so make us care about what happens next. Given the proper producer and director, any screenwriter, however distinguished he may be, and however moved by his own words, must be subordinate to the independent life of the moving image. In the filmed version of *The Crucible*, the moving image happens to be potent.

To be sure, the camera's will to power is here abetted by the fact that the two main antagonists—Deputy Governor John Danforth, who declares himself to be on a mission from the king to extirpate all witchcraft from the colony of Massachusetts, and the farmer John Proctor, who knows the witch trials are based on fraud and who will not sign the required testament to their legitimacy—are played by two of the world's most gripping performers. Paul Scofield, who plays Danforth, may well be the greatest actor of our time—certainly on the screen there is no contest—while Daniel Day-Lewis, who plays Proctor, has proved himself a purveyor of 37 varieties of dark passion, all of them enthralling to watch.

Salem, a place which in real life was soon to become one of the more beautiful colonial towns in America, has been recreated by Nicholas Hytner as a village of small gloomy structures huddled together in mud and undergrowth whose ordinary denizens seem seldom to have washed. Day-Lewis, as is his wont, very much plays into, and intensifies, the surroundings which the "atmosphere"-loving Hytner has made for him; Scofield, whose role as the trial judge ultimately becomes the fixed center of the action, seems with no more than his eyes and mouth to keep both the setting and the drama properly under control.

There are a number of other very good performances, mostly in minor parts, but between them Day-Lewis and Scofield also do a great deal to cover for some of the less than fully adequate ones, including that of Winona Ryder in the role of the chief accuser. In such a drama, with such a director and such a *mise-en-scène*, the temptation must have been terrible to roll one's eyes and flounce about more than was strictly required, and more than once the leading lady gives evidence of surrendering to temptation. But her co-stars somehow manage to keep her ever so slightly out of the center of the viewer's attention where she might otherwise have threatened to sink the movie's premise—which is that her character is not bewitched or hysterical at all but is making mischief with malice aforethought.

The movie, then, while perhaps not quite so conducive to deep feeling and high reflection as Arthur Miller might have wished, is genuinely good and gripping entertainment. It moves and even, in Miller's term, "speaks." We want the good guys to be saved and know they will not be; we want the bad guys to be punished and know they will not be; yet as we watch the villagers, at first enthusiastic spectators of the hangings, slowly growing ashamed, we also understand that what we are

* Penguin Books, 93 pp. (paper), $12.95.

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witnessing at the movie's climax will be Salem's last hanging for witchcraft. We have seen the story unfold from beginning to end and we have been dramatically convinced by it: a good afternoon's or evening's work.

BUT CONVINCED about what? What is the story Miller wishes to tell, especially in relation to the story Hytner and the actors actually make us see? The ghost of McCarthyism has by now long since been laid: it is likely that at least half the audience for this movie no longer knows who the Senator and his associates were and that the remainder no longer precisely remembers how his misbegotten business was in fact conducted.

Is the filmed *Crucible*, then, about the *historical* Puritans of Salem and their witch trials? One might imagine so, since the movie, as movies do, brings them up close and makes them vivid. But it is also painfully clear that for Arthur Miller, at least, the Puritans of Salem hold no real interest, and that he neither understands nor credits the reality of their religious faith—which means that he does not understand or credit the very key to their existence.

His hero John Proctor, for example, the most decent and clearly the most intelligent man in the village, declines to go to church—but for the very un-17th-century reason that he dislikes and distrusts the preacher. And when, in the end, Proctor's wife forgives him for the sin of adulterous fornication, it is again on the distinctly un-Puritan grounds that *she* had been sexually unresponsive to him and was thus the guilty party. Nor does it seem plausible to Miller that, even in 1692, any Salemites could have been genuinely seized by a fear of witches. In his telling, once the ball of accusation starts to roll—put into motion as nothing more than a ploy for a group of misbehaving young girls to escape punishment—it becomes merely the occasion for the settling of a variety of old scores.

Now (it may be protested), the fact that Miller's version of the Salem story is inauthentic and that his Puritans bear little resemblance to the genuine article is not really to the point. After all, what audiences want is not to be historically informed but to be really engaged; and engage us *The Crucible* does. Still, it remains the case that Arthur Miller has something more than this in mind. Though he has agreed to abide by the limiting requirements of filmmaking, he clearly wishes to "show" us more than is on the screen. In particular, he would help us to recognize what he himself has long known to be a reliable truth: namely, that in any conflict, those who abide by the dictates of the ongoing system are almost certainly morally compromised, while those whom the system would cast out are almost certainly its innocent victims and martyrs. "He have his goodness now," declares John Proctor's wife when in the end he reneges on a bargain to confess and save himself from hanging.

In the course of his own introduction to the published screenplay, Nicholas Hytner mentions being struck—perhaps with some assistance from the screenwriter—by *The Crucible*'s "alarming topicality": just as it once spoke to the issue of Joe McCarthy, so, Hytner writes, it speaks today to such problems as the bigotry of religious fundamentalists and communities torn apart by accusations of child abuse. In other words, now as ever falsehood has a million friends, the truth but few.

But is this not a puzzling idea to be lodged in the mind of Arthur Miller and his comrades? Though he holds himself to be the most courageous teller of hard truths about his society, the not-so-hard truth is that the McCarthyites quickly disappeared into obscurity, whereas Miller—for a brief moment the subject of their interrogations—has prospered mightily and by now must take quite for granted the experience of being swathed in his society's highest encomia.

Be that as it may, however, if one sets aside the social claptrap hiding backstage, there is more than enough entertainment in this costume drama to be getting on with.

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MUSIC

Schubert Lives

Terry Teachout

FRANZ SCHUBERT was born 200 years ago this past January, and the anniversary was marked by countless public performances and new recordings of his music. But among all the observances of this bicentennial, perhaps the most important passed largely without notice: the publication, here and in Great Britain, of Elizabeth Norman McKay's *Franz Schubert: A Biography*.*

McKay, an English pianist and scholar, writes in her introduction that she has sought merely to provide for the educated general reader a concise account of Schubert's life, times, and music, while incorporating the fruits of "many new developments and advances in research into Schubert and his music, particularly in Germany, Austria, and the United States." This unassuming declaration of intent conceals a singular achievement: not only has McKay made the new Schubert scholarship available to nonspecialist audiences—including the speculative "research" of recent years which addresses the alleged significance of the composer's sexuality—but she has also evaluated it critically and placed it in historical context.

Nor is even an accurate telling of Schubert's life as simple a task as it may sound. Because he was not yet famous at the time of his death in 1828, the wealth of documentary evidence normally available to biographers of major composers is, in Schubert's case, largely nonexistent. According to McKay:

> Had he lived longer, [Schubert] might have looked back on this year [1828] as a turning-point in his fortunes, with the promise of publication of more of his instrumental works as well as a wider appreciation of his greatest songs. As it was, immediately after his death there was no one among his family or friends who fully appreciated the wealth and quality of his instrumental music, or who was willing or able to persuade publishers to make more of it readily available to the public.

As a result, several of Schubert's major works were not published until many years after he died—the "Unfinished" Symphony did not appear in print until 1867—and it was only in the mid-19th century that he started to win general recognition as an important composer of instrumental music. In addition, primary source material for many of the details of his life was limited to the reminiscences of his friends and contemporaries, which were not collected until early in this century.

Because of all this, any discussion of the life of Schubert must necessarily contain a certain amount of more or less informed speculation. Elizabeth McKay, for one, is always careful to differentiate unambiguously between what she thinks and what we know, and the facts, as she lays them before us, are poignant enough.

BORN IN Vienna in 1797, Franz Peter Schubert was the youngest of four surviving children of Franz Theodor Florian Schubert, an elementary schoolmaster, and his wife Maria Elisabeth, who had been in domestic service before she married. His father began to teach the boy violin at the age of eight, and in

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* Oxford, 362 pp., $35.00.

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1808 he became a chorister of the imperial court chapel and undertook intensive professional training in music. By the time he was sixteen, Schubert seems to have felt that he had no more to learn in an academic setting. Following an unhappy interlude in which he studied to become a schoolteacher and then worked briefly for his father in that capacity, he made his living as a musician. And what a musician: other composers have exhibited signs of genius at earlier ages, but in the speed with which he reached musical maturity, Schubert can be compared only to Mozart.

Schubert's existence from 1818 on was of a kind later generations of artists learned to call "bohemian." Though the bulk of his energies was devoted to composition, he led an undisciplined private life, drinking heavily (and, it is believed, smoking opium) and engaging in promiscuous sexual activities, possibly involving prostitutes. Schubert had long been subject to mood swings—he referred to them as early as 1816 in a diary entry—and in time they became pronounced enough, especially in combination with his increasingly dissolute behavior, to cause great concern to his friends. As one of them wrote after his death:

> Anyone who knew Schubert knows how he was made of two natures, foreign to each other, how powerfully the craving for pleasure dragged his soul down to the slough of moral degradation. . . . His body, strong as it was, succumbed to the cleavage in his—I would like to say souls, of which the one pressed heavenwards and the other wallowed in slime; perhaps, too, it succumbed to frustration over the lack of recognition which some of his larger efforts suffered and to bitterness at the meanness of his publishers.

Apparently toward the end of 1822, Schubert learned that he had contracted syphilis, a disease which at the time was both physically debilitating and likely to lead to an early death. It also precluded sexual relations with respectable women (save at the risk of infecting one's partner). Thus, Schubert was sentenced at the age of twenty-five to a life of discomfort and frustration, and though there were periods when he was in comparatively good health, he thereafter lived with the knowledge that he harbored a deadly disease.

From 1823 on, Schubert's compositions, as if to compensate for the shrinking horizon of his life span, became steadily more ambitious; most of the large-scale instrumental works for which he is now primarily remembered, as well as his three great song cycles, were written after he learned of his illness. His mature compositional style was characterized by a melodic gift of unprecedented richness, a preference for unexpected, wide-ranging changes of key, and a sometimes unsettlingly rapid alternation of sunny lyricism and passionate melancholy, all held in counterpoise by his use of the traditional formal structures of the late 18th century, sometimes construed loosely but invariably present.

In the last year of his life, Schubert completed a virtually unbroken succession of masterpieces, not only the song cycles *Winterreise* and *Schwanengesang*, but the C-major String Quintet, three piano sonatas, and the "Great" C-major Symphony. But in the fall of 1828, he began to complain of "constant giddiness," and his health disintegrated altogether at the end of October; while it is possible that he contracted typhoid fever (the stated cause of his death), it is certain that he was also in the tertiary stage of syphilis.

A group of string-playing friends is thought to have come to Schubert's apartment to perform Beethoven's C-sharp-minor Quartet, op. 131, on or about November 14. He died five days later, two months short of thirty-two, and was laid to rest in the same cemetery where Beethoven had been buried the year before. The Austrian playwright Franz Grillparzer composed an inscription for the monument of the prematurely dead master: "The art of music here entombed a rich possession, but far fairer hopes."

THE STORY of Schubert's short life is extraordinarily compelling, and Elizabeth McKay tells it skillfully. In so doing, she also manages to avoid the two greatest pitfalls of musical biography (if not of artistic biography in general): making too little of the artist's life, and making too much of it.

Does information about Schubert's life have any bearing on the way we experience his music, or is it merely a distraction? One obstacle to answering this question is the fact that there have been so few biographies of classical composers comparable in quality to, say, George Painter's *Marcel Proust* or W. Jackson Bate's *Samuel Johnson*. And the reason for this can be partly explained by the fact that until very recently, the academic study of classical music has been dominated by what the American musicologist Joseph Kerman calls "positivistic" scholarship, which emphasizes the collection of facts over their critical interpretation:

> What I would call serious music criticism . . . does not exist as a discipline on a par with musicology and music theory on the one hand, or literary and art criticism on the other. We do not have musical Arnolds or Eliots, Blackmurs or Kermodes, Ruskins or Schapiros.

This is a serious impediment to the writing of critical biographies which seek to relate a composer's music to the circumstances of his life. No less problematic, though, is the nature of music itself, which unlike literature is not made of words (though it often makes use of them), and unlike nonabstract painting and sculpture does not "represent" the

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physical world (at least not in a way that can be reliably decoded by the uninformed listener). To search for the "autobiographical sources" of a symphony is thus to be exposed to the ridicule of those musical formalists who hold, with Igor Stravinsky, that "music expresses itself," by which they mean that it expresses *only* itself.

To be sure, not everybody holds to such purely formalistic theories of musical meaning. As J.W.N. Sullivan put it in his 1927 book, *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*: "[I]n his greatest music Beethoven was primarily concerned to express his personal vision of life . . . and the known history of the man may be used to throw light upon the character of his music." This view is, of course, most readily applied to composers of the Romantic era (most of whom shared it), and it is no coincidence that many of the greatest musical biographies, including Ernest Newman's four-volume life of Wagner, Alan Walker's three-volume life of Franz Liszt, and David Cairns's ongoing multivolume biography of Hector Berlioz, have dealt with the major figures of the 19th century.

For such writers—as, I believe, for most people who are seriously interested in music as aesthetic experience—it is possible, in practice if not in theory, to reconcile Stravinsky and Sullivan: that is, to use biographical data to deepen the reader's appreciation of autonomous works of art. In order to respond fully to Schubert's A-minor Piano Sonata, D. 784, for example, it may not be necessary to know anything about the circumstances of its composition, but Elizabeth McKay gives new shape and precision to the strong emotions it embodies:

> After he contracted syphilis, Schubert was often in pain and distress and lost the capacity for uninhibited joy. His music was frequently born out of suffering. . . . Although the early months of 1823 saw Schubert rejecting requests for compositions which he had earlier promised but now felt unable to provide, by late February he found the energy and will to compose the Piano Sonata in A minor, D. 784. This is one of the darkest of all his compositions, autobiographical in the emotions it expressed of pain, distress, anger, and ill temper, and certainly the grimmest music he had written to date.*

But if excessive positivism and formalism are one pitfall of musical biography, today's musicologists, especially in this country, are more likely to go to the opposite extreme: resorting to interpretative strategies, many of them derived from the now-fashionable techniques of literary theory and cultural studies, in which music is at times reduced to the sum of its autobiographical sources.

The case of Schubert is, indeed, grist for the mills of such scholars, in part because there are so many blank pages in his life which can be conveniently filled with personal theories or hidden and not so hidden agendas. Thus, in an essay published eight years ago, the American musicologist Maynard Solomon suggested, on the basis of an ambiguous entry in a diary kept by one of the composer's friends, that Schubert was a pederast, and that references to his sexual misconduct found in the reminiscences of his other friends were to be read as further proof of his homosexuality.

Solomon's thesis immediately became a *cause célèbre*, and others soon began to publish papers in which the matter of Schubert's homosexuality was taken as settled. At least one noted feminist musicologist, Susan McClary, has gone so far as to produce a "homosexual analysis" of the "Unfinished" Symphony. Another musicologist, Philip Brett, has accused those who doubt Schubert was homosexual of defensive homophobia:

> At stake is the status of a major mainstream European master (rather than, say, a deviant Russian one), and the energy that has gone into suppressing the notion that he might have been sexually as well as emotionally involved with others of his own sex is but one indicator of the fear and repression on which the notion of musicality and musical scholarship in the West is built.

So far as I know, no Schubert scholar prior to Maynard Solomon seriously considered the possibility that Schubert might have been homosexual or bisexual. But the reason had nothing to do with "fear and repression." Not only did Schubert's friends make no reference in their memoirs to his having sexual relations with men, but such romantic entanglements as he appears to have had during his adult life were with women whose identities are known. Elizabeth McKay's book contains a short but thorough summary of the relevant data, which lead her to conclude—to my mind, convincingly—that it is "more likely that Schubert was heterosexual in his adult life."

McKay does not reject the possibility that Schubert's music might have been significantly shaped by the "dark side" of his "two natures," on which his friends so often remarked. But instead of narrowly construing this dark side as sexual, she has sought a broader explanation. From her examination of the available biographical facts, McKay concludes that Schubert suffered from cyclothymia, a mild form of manic depression common among artists and aggravated in his case by syphilis and abuse of alcohol. In a particularly suggestive passage, she argues that Schubert's cyclothymia is reflected in

> the slow movements of [his] later works, where sudden rage

* One of the finest recent recordings of the A-minor Sonata is by the young Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin (Sony SK 64538). For other recordings of Schubert's music, see the discography at the end of this article.

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> shatters an established mood of, for example, quiet reflection. . . . The power and insistence of all these passages, and many more, come as a shock to the listener more familiar with Schubert's lyrical moods; but they are dominant features in much of Schubert's music.

Whether one finds this thesis plausible or not, it serves to remind us that art, deep though its roots may be planted in experience, is not an epiphenomenon of that experience, and thus cannot be fully explained by reference to the lives of its creators. If Franz Schubert was indeed a manic-depressive, that is no more an "explanation" of his music than is his syphilis, his poverty, or any of the other known facts of his life. And even when his music reflects his immediate circumstances, what matters in the end is not that it tells us something about his life or times but that it is overpoweringly beautiful.

And yet, we must immediately add that there is, at the same time, nothing impersonal or objective about Schubert's music. While it is not "Romantic" as the music of Liszt is Romantic, it nevertheless expresses his character—and, I believe, his vision of life—in a way to which listeners have always responded strongly. In that sense, perhaps, Schubert's music can indeed be "read" as a spiritual autobiography: the story of how a young man of genius, confronted by the near-certainty of an early death, found within himself the ability to rise triumphantly above his pain and terror and create immortal masterpieces.

To know the details of this story is to be moved all the more deeply by the completeness of the triumph. For surely it is Schubert's uncanny capacity to draw transcendent beauty from sorrow and darkness that has made his compositions so central to the aesthetic life of the West, to the point where he is now regarded by many listeners—rightly, in my view—as second only to Mozart in his power to express through the elusive language of music the ultimate concerns of man's mind and heart.

A Select Discography

SCHUBERT'S MUSIC has figured prominently throughout the century-long history of the phonograph and its successor technology, the digital compact disc. Here is a list of some of the most individual recordings of the century:

1926: The pianist Alfred Cortot, the violinist Jacques Thibaud, and the cellist Pablo Casals rendered the B-flat Piano Trio, D. 898, shortly after the introduction of electrical recording. Despite (or because of) their oddly matched styles, this is among the most vivid surviving examples of prewar chamber-music performance practice (EMI CDH 61024).

1928: The violinist Fritz Kreisler and the pianist-composer Sergei Rachmaninoff recorded the A-major Violin Sonata, D. 574 (together with sonatas by Beethoven and Grieg); their collaboration is a seductive blend of Austrian *Gemütlichkeit* and Russian melancholy (RCA Victor Gold Seal 09026-68449-2).

1931-38: The violinist Adolf Busch not only distinguished himself as a soloist and trio player (in collaboration with the cellist Hermann Busch, his brother, and the pianist Rudolf Serkin, his son-in-law) but led the Busch Quartet, one of the most celebrated prewar ensembles to specialize in the German and Austrian classics. Busch and his colleagues recorded quite a bit of Schubert, including the D-minor Quartet ("Death and the Maiden"), D. 810, and the E-flat Piano Trio, D. 929 (Pearl GEMM CDS 9141, two CD's).

1934: The pianist Edwin Fischer was regarded in his lifetime as second only to Artur Schnabel as an exponent of Schubert. Fischer's recording of the "Wanderer" Fantasy, D. 760, was made when he was at the height of his powers (his postwar playing was uneven), and displays his passionate, sometimes wayward style to excellent advantage (Pearl GEMM CD 9216).

1934-39: The tenor Karl Erb was noted for the inward spirituality of his singing (to which Thomas Mann paid eloquent tribute in his 1948 novel, *Doctor Faustus*). Erb recorded 21 of Schubert's songs on 78's, including *Litanei*, *Du bist die Ruh*, *Ave Maria*, *Nacht und Traume*, and *Liebesbotschaft*. These performances, accompanied by Bruno Seidler-Winkler and now available as part of *Karl Erb Liederalbum*, represent the high-water mark of Schubert singing between the wars (Preiser 89208, two CD's).

1935-39: Artur Schnabel is thought to be the first pianist to have performed Schubert's sonatas in concert—as well as among the first to have recorded them—but the best-loved of his many Schubert record-

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ings was a chamber-music collaboration with the Pro Arte Quartet, the A-major Piano Quintet ("Trout"), D. 667 (EMI CDH 63031). Sixty-two years after it was recorded, this performance is still admired for its freshness and high spirits. Most of Schnabel's solo recordings of Schubert, including the three major piano sonatas (in D major, D. 850; A major, D. 959; and B-flat major, D. 960), are also available on compact discs (EMI CDHB 64259, two CD's).

1941: Arturo Toscanini's first commercial recording of the C-major Symphony ("The Great"), D. 944, was made not with the NBC Symphony but with the Leopold Stokowski-trained Philadelphia Orchestra (RCA Victor Gold Seal 60313-2-RG). His deliberately anti-traditional interpretation—which remains controversial in German-speaking countries—is noteworthy for its brisk tempos and strongly Beethovenian atmosphere.

1950: The Vienna Philharmonic has preserved till today a tradition of orchestral playing firmly rooted in 19th-century performance practice. Wilhelm Fürtwangler's recording with the Philharmonic of the B-minor Symphony ("Unfinished"), D. 759, combines the orchestra's characteristically "Viennese" tone quality with a visionary intensity unique to the conductor (EMI CDH 63193).

1951: The Hollywood String Quartet's recording of the C-major String Quintet, D. 956, is now available on the Testament label (SBT 1031). This vibrant performance is a key document in the history of the Jascha Heifetz-influenced Russian-American style that now dominates classical string playing.

1958: Sir Thomas Beecham's performance with the Royal Philharmonic of the B-flat Symphony, D. 485, is a miracle of idiosyncrasy. Standing outside all received traditions of Schubert interpretation, Beecham's fleet, impulsively lyrical conducting is—to use an overworked but nonetheless appropriate word—magical (EMI CDM 69750).

1963: The tenor Peter Pears recorded *Winterreise*, D. 911, with the composer Benjamin Britten (a tremendously gifted accompanist) at the piano, and their version of this greatest of all song cycles is unrivaled for its depth of insight (London 417 473-2LM).

1964-69: The big-hearted performances of the two piano trios by the pianist Eugene Istomin, the violinist Isaac Stern, and the cellist Leonard Rose—the first all-American "all-star" chamber ensemble—introduced an entire generation of American listeners to Schubert's chamber music (Sony SM2K 64516, two CD's).

1969: No performer of the postwar period has been more closely identified with Schubert than the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. In addition to putting on disc all of Schubert's song cycles (several times), Fischer-Dieskau recorded the separate Schubert songs suitable for male voice, partnered by the pianist Gerald Moore. These performances have been transferred in their entirety to compact disc, and the second volume, consisting of songs composed between 1817 and Schubert's death in 1828, is a particularly eloquent testament to Fischer-Dieskau's peerless gifts as a Lieder-singer (DGG 437 225-2GX9, nine CD's).

1980: Of the various recordings of *Die schöne Müllerin*, D. 795, made by the tenor Peter Schreier, the loveliest is the one with the guitarist Konrad Ragossnig (Berlin Classics BER 1123). Though the arrangement (by Ragossnig and John Duarte) of Schubert's original piano part is not authentic, the intimacy of Schreier's singing is greatly enhanced by the restricted dynamic scale of the accompaniment—a quality well suited to this song cycle about a wandering miller and his lost love.

1989: Franz Liszt made hundreds of transcriptions and arrangements for solo piano of Schubert's music, thereby contributing significantly to the composer's posthumous popularity in the mid-19th century. The pianist Vladimir Horowitz recorded three Schubert-Liszt arrangements—*Standchen* and two of the *Soirées de Vienne*—in his extreme old age, and these ultra-Romantic performances (included on a CD called *Horowitz at Home*) are priceless relics of the golden age of virtuoso pianism (DGG 427 772-2GH).

1997: Scheduled for release by DGG later this year is a CD of Schubert songs performed by the mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter. To judge by her 1996 New York debut recital, this album will become a major addition to the Schubert discography.

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Books in Review

The West & the Rest

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order
by Samuel P. Huntington
Simon & Schuster. 367 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Richard Pipes

THE END of the cold war and the disintegration of the bipolar world have given rise to a flood of articles and books attempting to forecast the shape of the future. The earliest and best-known of these, by Francis Fukuyama, appeared first as an essay in the *National Interest* (Summer 1989) and then, expanded in book form, under the title *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). Fukuyama adopted a Hegelian view of history as a universal and meaningful process which would end "when mankind had achieved a form of society that satisfied its deepest and most fundamental longings." This did not mean that life would come to a standstill but that, in Fukuyama's words, "there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all of the really big questions had been settled."

First published just as the Communist bloc was beginning to fall apart, Fukuyama's work exuded unbounded optimism. The victory of the West in the cold war, he contended, spelled the decisive triumph of Western values and "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." These words, too, echoed Hegel, who in his *Philosophy of History* had asserted that "Europe is absolutely the end of history."

Although not presented as such, Samuel P. Huntington's book is a response to Fukuyama. Tempered by five years of experience with post-cold-war international politics—years of ethnic and religious violence—it takes a rather somber view of the future. "The early years of the 21st century," Huntington predicts, "are likely to see an ongoing resurgence of non-Western power and culture and the clash of peoples of non-Western civilizations with the West and each other."

The thrust of Huntington's argument concerns the progress of Westernization. He rejects the notion of universal history: the vision of a world inevitably succumbing to Western values, he argues, rests on superficial impressions gathered from the spread of "fizzy liquids, faded pants, and fatty foods," or on the adoption of English as the global *lingua franca*. Neither of these, Huntington claims, has much to do with Westernization in any meaningful sense of the word. To the contrary, the West's influence in the world is waning, because of growing resistance to its values and the reassertion by non-Westerners of their own cultures.

For Huntington, the basic units of the global chessboard are civilizations. "In the post-cold-war world," he writes, "the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political or economic. They are cultural." He divides the world

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into seven or possibly eight civilizations, each endowed with its own, internally cohesive, culture: Western, Christian Orthodox, Sinic, Hindu, Japanese, Islamic, Latin American, and (with hesitation) African. Except for Islam, each of these has a "core state" which defends and promotes its values.

Like the notion that world history has an "end," Huntington's view of history as made up of distinct civilizations also derives ultimately from Hegel, who regarded the progression of human history as occurring in phases, each dominated by a specific culture. The first theorist to translate Hegel's philosophy of history into a philosophy of politics was Nicholas Danilevsky, a Russian Panslavist who in *Russia and Europe* (1869-71) saw world history as comprising ten to twelve distinct civilizations or "cultural-historical types," each self-contained and defined by its religion, arts, politics, and economy. Parting company with Hegel, Danilevsky went on to assail the notion that Western civilization was the yardstick by which to judge world history. In his view, moreover, the ability of one civilization to influence another was minimal.

Danilevsky's ideas were adopted, usually without credit, by Spengler, Toynbee, and other writers, and have now resurfaced in Huntington. Like Danilevsky, Huntington too believes neither in universal civilization nor in the ability of one civilization genuinely to influence another. Not only are the world's civilizations not being amalgamated under the influence of Westernization but they are moving in separate directions: "Peoples and countries with similar cultures are coming together. Peoples and cultures with different cultures are coming apart."

THE GREAT merit of this book is to shift discussion of the post-cold-war world from ideology, ethnicity, politics, and economics to culture—and especially to the religious basis of culture, a subject generally ignored

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DAVID HOROWITZ is the bestselling co-author of *The Rockefellers* and *The Kennedys*, president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, and co-editor of *Heterodoxy*.

Published by The Free Press, *Radical Son* is available at local bookstores everywhere; or call 800-752-6562 to order copies.

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in contemporary political science. Huntington is right to warn us against facile generalizations about the world's becoming one; to point out the resilience of civilizations to foreign influences; and to underscore the ease with which religious values become secularized. I have long been struck by the degree to which, in Russia, Communism's anti-capitalist ideology replicated the medieval hostility to Catholicism of the Orthodox Church, and by how the same attitude has survived in post-Communist Russia, reformulated now in xenophobic terms.

This having been said, however, I question Huntington's lack of confidence both in the future of Western civilization and in its ability to influence the rest of the world.

For one thing, resistance to Western ideas in many places around the globe is inspired not so much by the desire to cling to one's own values as by fear, on the part of indigenous elites, of the social and political consequences of Westernization. When the Communist bureaucrats running China reject the concept of "human rights" as alien to their national culture, they do not mean that Chinese culture calls for oppression but that the slogan threatens their own power and privileges. The same holds true for much of the anti-Westernism in the Islamic world. We are dealing here not so much with cultural values as with vested interests disguised as a defense of cultural values. Whether these vested interests can maintain their status in the face of economic globalization and the spread of communications is an open question.

BUT I find myself in even more fundamental disagreement with Huntington over the notion of Western civilization itself. In defining its attributes, he stresses the classical legacy of Greece and Rome; Catholicism and Protestantism; the multiplicity of Western languages; the separation of spiritual and secular authority; the rule of law; social pluralism; representative institutions; and individualism. These categories leave out what is most decisive in the rise of the West to world hegemony: namely, private property with its corollaries, political freedom and economic growth. It is these that make Western civilization unique. Any country that wishes to attain prosperity and power in the modern world has no choice but to emulate these Western ways with all their attendant consequences.

Some contemporary economic historians have demonstrated that the unprecedented growth of the Western economy has been due first and foremost to the creation of a juridical base favorable to enterprise, with private property as its centerpiece. As Douglass C. North and Robert P. Thomas put it in *The Rise of the Western World* (1973):

> Efficient economic organization is the key to growth; the development of efficient economic organization in Western Europe accounts for the rise of the West. Efficient organization entails the establishment of institutional arrangements and property rights that create an incentive to channel individual economic effort into activities that bring the private rate of return close to the social rate of return.

If this hypothesis is correct—and the close correlation between the per-capita wealth of countries and the degree to which they guarantee private property and individual freedom suggests that it is—then it follows that economic growth, which is the foundation of prosperity, social stability, and international influence, entails Westernization. Huntington is worried that China's economic rise may mean that that country and its civilization will supplant the United States and Europe as the world's leading power and perhaps even succeed in having its language replace English as the international means of communication. The question is, rather: can China accomplish this without adopting Western values? The experience of the Soviet Union would suggest that the answer is no.

AT THE beginning of his book, Huntington provides maps which graphically depict the shrinking control of the world's surface by the Western powers since 1920. Indisputably, the West's physical presence has drastically diminished. But this fact does not necessarily mean a diminution of its cultural influence, which is the real focus of Huntington's concerns. In fact, the mounting hostility to Western values, for which Huntington offers a great deal of evidence, can be interpreted as proving that Western cultural influence is increasing. One hundred years ago, when Europeans ruled most of the Muslim Middle East, they left local cultures undisturbed and hence met little cultural resistance. Today, even as the West's political presence has become a thing of the past, its ideas penetrate and threaten; the reassertion of local values would be unnecessary if Western ideas were not upsetting and altering them.

Though he denies it, the political implication of Huntington's thesis is isolationism: the recommendation that the West in general, and the United States in particular, refrain from conflict with other civilizations as well as involvement in their internal quarrels. His advice for the Western powers is to draw closer together, maintain their strength, and, above all, recognize "that Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilizational world." On this premise, Huntington retrospectively condemns U.S. intervention against Saddam Hussein in the Gulf war. In a world in which the United States has interests scattered around the globe, and the unique capability to stop aggression and subversion, this strikes me as a very risky prescription.

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I suspect that the truth lies somewhere between Fukuyama and Huntington: the two books complement each other. Fukuyama seems to me correct in predicting the ultimate triumph of Westernization, but he is oblivious of the immense difficulties which the West will have to overcome—difficulties which Huntington spells out in a very persuasive manner.

What Lasts

The Book and the Sword: A Life of Learning in the Shadow of Destruction
by David Weiss Halivni

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 196 pp. $21.00

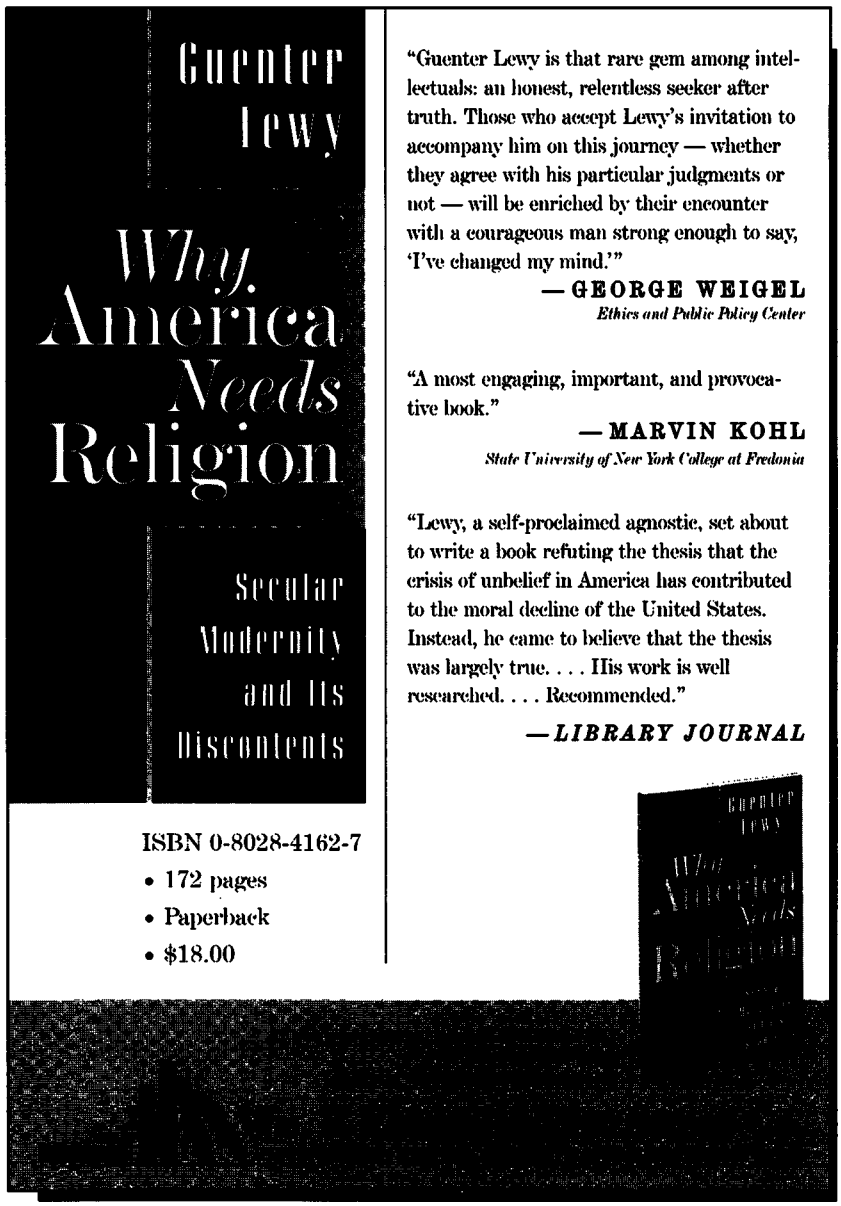
Reviewed by
Alan Mintz

The Talmud, the foundational document of classical Judaism, is a forbidding, multivolume work with a reputation for difficulty that derives not only from its vast size and abstruse terminology but also from many passages that simply do not appear to make logical sense. Traditional methods of study resolve these contradictions through an interpretative virtuosity which explains local problems by adducing relevant passages from distant places in the text. But there is also a modern, critical mode of technical analysis, based on the understanding that the text itself was redacted over the course of 400-to-500 years and that later sages did not always understand earlier traditions or may have possessed versions corrupted in transmission.

One of the most eminent practitioners of this kind of critical study today is David Weiss Halivni, Lucius N. Littauer professor of classical Jewish civilization at Columbia University. His prodigiously learned research into the work of the later rabbinic sages amounts to an archeology of the Talmud: by uncovering the likely original meaning of corrupted traditions, he has proposed coherent reconstructions of legal discussions whose difficulties have challenged generations of scholars; in the process, he has articulated an entire conceptual framework for understanding what he refers to as the "Jewish predilection for justified law."

In addition to being a master scholar, Halivni is a survivor of Auschwitz. His determination to place the two salient facts of his life in more than an accidental relationship is the animating impulse behind *The Book and the Sword*, and it is what makes the book both important and in some respects unique.

Alan Mintz *teaches Hebrew literature at Brandeis University and recently edited (with Anne Golomb Hoffman)* A Book That Was Lost and Other Stories by S. Y. Agnon *(Schocken).*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Early in his childhood in the Transylvanian town of Sighet, Halivni tells us, he was identified as an *ilui*, a Talmud prodigy. A child genius was a source of great communal pride: at five or six, his sayings were being quoted around town, and the boy, who lived in the household of his maternal grandfather with two sisters (one totally disabled), his divorced mother, and her two unmarried sisters, soon discovered that, since people were willing to pay for displays of his prowess, he could also provide some material support for his beleaguered family.

It was his grandfather, a penurious but distinguished talmudist, who took responsibility for the nurturing of the boy's gift. Halivni's homage to this venerable figure at once repays a debt of gratitude and identifies, in his grandfather's rejection of the then-dominant style of Talmud study in favor of greater emphasis on the plain meaning of the text, a kind of precedent for the controversial innovations he himself would later introduce in his academic work.

With rare psychological candor, Halivni acknowledges that his boyhood feats of learning, however much they may have been motivated by religious devotion, were also driven by a need for recognition and security. But if he was fortunate in being rewarded for what he did best, his good luck brought anxiety as well. Because not only his own self-esteem but the happiness of a large household depended upon his success, the need to excel was overwhelming; so, too, was the fear of situations in which his gift might not be recognized.

THIS WAS the background to events that began to unfold in March 1944, when the Nazis occupied Hungary and the Jews of Sighet were deported to Auschwitz. There, Joseph Mengele sent Halivni—by now a young man of seventeen—to the left, his mother and grandfather to the right and immediate death. Torn from his family, horrifically abased, Halivni nevertheless drew strength from the text to which his life had hitherto been devoted. Talmud study had served many purposes in his existence; now, the religious values of which it was the quintessential expression provided a shield against despair and dehumanization.

Halivni passes rather quickly over his time in Auschwitz and in the slave-labor camp to which he was later transferred. After the war, he made his way to America, and his tale becomes one of a displaced, penniless orphan whose true powers are gradually revealed and then in the end richly acknowledged. He studied in advanced yeshivas in New York and attended Brooklyn College, where for the first time he encountered secular subjects. Sought out by a succession of scholar-rabbis from the worlds of the yeshiva and hasidic Judaism, he ended up studying with the preeminent talmudic philologist Saul Lieberman at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the rabbinical institution of Conservative Judaism.

Eventually Halivni, too, became a professor at the Seminary, where for 30 years he happily taught and conducted his research until resigning over its 1983 decision to ordain women as Conservative rabbis. He is now a spokesman for what he calls "traditional Judaism," an approach that simultaneously affirms the rigorously critical study of Jewish texts and the faithful observance of Jewish religious law.

HALIVNI DEVOTES more than half of *The Book and the Sword* to his break with the Seminary, an account that will fascinate anyone interested in postwar American Jewish life and the development of the Conservative movement. For the seasoned reader of Holocaust memoirs, however, Halivni's book is bound to seem meager. Although he offers vivid recollections of arriving at Auschwitz and leaving it, he appears to have suppressed almost all memory of what he saw and experienced there. The core of horror seems to be missing.

In this respect, the story told in *The Book and the Sword* differs markedly from that told in the work of Elie Wiesel, a much better-known author who, exactly like Halivni, was a young talmudist in Sighet before the war. Wiesel's first and most influential book, *Night* (English translation 1960), records in detail the unspeakable horror of the camps, and the breakdown of spiritual and cognitive identity to which it led. Because of its power, and perhaps also its timing, *Night* established an entire paradigm for understanding the experience of the Holocaust. In his later fiction, Wiesel often paints a portrait of the survivor as one who endures a kind of death-in-life, literally possessed by the burden of bearing witness to catastrophe.

Halivni, by contrast, Wiesel's townsman and age-mate, is interested less in the destruction of personal identity than in its persistence. Clearly, the reason he devotes the preponderance of his book to the years before and after the war is that he perceives an essential continuity between the two periods, a continuity which the war traumatically interrupted but failed to shatter. The central axis of identity remains unbroken.

The nature of that axis is brought out in a brief passage dealing with Halivni's experience in a labor camp where the inmates dug tunnels to protect munitions factories from Allied bombardment. Every night, Halivni would pass by a Nazi guard eating a greasy sandwich; the grease made the sandwich-paper translucent, and one night the emaciated young talmudist was able to discern that the paper was actually

> a page of *Orach Chaim*, a volume of the *Shulhan Aruch*, Pesil Balaban's edition. The Balabans began publishing the *Shulhan Aruch*, the [16th-century] Jewish code of law, in Lemberg in 1839. The

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first publisher was Abraham Balaban, and after his death he was succeeded by his widow, Pesil. Pesil's edition of the *Shulhan Aruch* was the best; it had all the commentaries. . . . As a child of a poor but scholarly home, I had always wanted to have her edition. . . . Here, of all places, in the shadows of the tunnel, under the threatening gaze of the German, a page from the *Shulhan Aruch*, fatty spots all over it, met my eyes.

Coaxed from the hands of the guard, the paper became a focus of clandestine study and a spiritual rallying point for the religious prisoners in the camp.

This beautiful vignette, evoking the then-prisoner's deep intimacy not only with a text but with its printing history, as well as his naive excitement over the fulfillment, under horribly degraded circumstances, of a boyhood wish, is thoroughly typical of Halivni's brand of faith. To say that that faith survived the nightmare of the Holocaust largely intact is not to say that he is worthier than others. But he may be no less representative.

Many survivors struggled after the war to establish lives that would be explicitly continuous with the religious and cultural values they had held before. Indeed, the enormous expansion of Orthodox Jewish life and institutions in Israel and America could not have taken place if these survivors and their communities had not been determined to restore what had been lost. Such individuals (Elie Wiesel, in his cultural and political activities, as distinct from the persona projected in his fiction, is among them too) are more numerous than we might conclude from reading some of the standard literature of the Holocaust—which is all the more reason to be grateful for the example, and the witness, of David Weiss Halivni.

Let Us Be

What It Means to Be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation

by Charles Murray

Broadway Books. 178 pp. $20.00

Reviewed by
Wilfred M. McClay

In thinking of libertarianism, what comes most readily to mind is a thoroughly individualistic, atomistic, freedom-loving, don't-tread-on-me mentality which exalts the autonomous self and the unregulated free market and vilifies government as a form of coercion or nannyism. In this sense libertarianism tends to be strikingly different from conservatism, particularly traditionalist conservatism, with its emphasis upon the authority of religion, inherited beliefs, codes of moral restraint, and customary institutions and usages—to libertarians, forms of imprisonment all.

Yet despite their differences, the two "isms" have to a surprising degree made common cause in the United States in the years since World War II. Such unity, based in large measure on a shared opposition to the threat of Communism abroad and statist liberalism at home, did not come easily or without conflict. Were it not for the efforts of shrewd and skillful leaders—notably William F. Buckley, Jr., whose *National Review* became the principal forum for libertarian/traditionalist exchange—the postwar conservative movement would certainly have divided, and been rendered ineffective.

One is inevitably reminded of this history in reading Charles Murray's *What It Means to Be a Libertarian*, a timely and highly accessible introduction to the libertarian "way of looking at the world." For Murray's book appears at a moment when the abiding tension between "social" and "economic" conservatives (as the two camps are commonly denominated today) is now largely uncountered by foreign-policy considerations, and once again threatens to pull the conservative movement apart. And that is not the only historical reference point one could cite. For Murray's outlook in this book is strikingly reminiscent of the work of Frank Meyer, a *National Review* editor of the 1950's and 60's who sought to moderate the libertarian/traditionalist conflict by propounding a hybrid of the two that he called "fusionism."

As for Murray himself, he is principally known as the author of two influential and controversial critiques of recent American social policy, *Losing Ground* (1984) and, with the late Richard J. Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve* (1994). But he is also someone whose own world view is not well understood. Here he attempts to outline the philosophical principles of that world view and to show how they might be applied positively to present-day issues. But though he advances a compelling defense of freedom, as well as many specific proposals of the kind one would expect from a believer in minimal government, that is not all he attempts to do. Murray is also trying to rescue the name of libertarianism from the extreme positions commonly associated with it.

Hence, one finds in this book a surprising degree of sympathy for a thinker like Edmund Burke, usually considered a founding father of traditionalist conservatism; for the wisdom and efficacy of the common law; and for the idea that freedom is to be prized not merely for its own sake but as the necessary precondition of a virtuous life and virtuous society. Like Meyer before him, Murray offers a brand of libertarianism designed to appeal precisely to those traditionalists and moderates who distrust libertarianism, and

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to convince them that the libertarian emphasis upon "spontaneous order" is an essential complement to their own aspirations.

In thus proposing a new fusionism (though without using the name), Murray emerges as something of a moralist. He believes that there is such a thing as "the good life," and that the freedom to aspire to such a good life touches upon the very core of our humanity. He speaks, as well, about the importance of personal responsibility—"freedom's obverse"—in enabling us to achieve happiness or to experience any degree of genuine satisfaction in our lives.

Where he is implacable, however, is in his hostility to government. Here Murray is clearly harking back to the arguments he made in *Losing Ground* regarding the negative or negligible effects of government interventions on our various social problems: poverty, education, health, safety, income, crime, the family. Government, in his view, is not only largely ineffectual in altering the course of a modern society, it can even make things worse by displacing the "civil response" that would have developed had government done nothing at all. The only choice left, therefore, is to limit government to those things it can do well, or to those things that *only* it can do—and do the other things ourselves, both individually and through the networks of free, uncoerced association that make up the structure of civil society.

What would this mean in practice? Though he sees little essential difference between his own view of government and that of the American Founders (thus once again demonstrating his traditionalist credentials), in Murray's Washington precious little would remain of what we think of as the normal machinery of our modern government: no regulatory agencies, no business or agricultural subsidies, no civil-rights enforcement apparatus, no HUD, no HHS, no Energy Department, no Transportation Department, no Commerce Department, no Post Office, no Social Security, no Medicare, no Medicaid. Murray grants that, in order to achieve this goal, we would need a period of transition out of our current arrangements (particularly in the case of the last three items on the list), but the end result, he contends, would be a society freer, more energetic, more vibrant, and more prosperous than what we enjoy today.

THIS, IN a nutshell, is Murray's effort to present libertarianism as offering a pathway to a better world—one grounded, moreover, in venerable American political traditions. Interestingly, though, in his pursuit of that latter objective, Murray is obliged to push to the side some nettlesome issues which a more severe libertarian would have engaged frontally. One of them is foreign policy, always a difficult subject for libertarians. Aside from a proposal to discontinue all foreign aid, there is virtually nothing said in this book about the conduct of foreign affairs. Would a libertarian America mean an isolationist America? Murray does not answer.

He also studiously avoids discussing some of the most divisive moral issues of our time, including abortion, physician-assisted suicide, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, and the like. In a libertarian society, it seems likely that such matters would be decided strictly on the basis of contractual or consensual agreements, without any recourse to notions of higher moral obligation, or of the state's "interest" in preserving the necessary elements of a stable and decent social order or in protecting the lives of its citizens. Clearly, some Americans would be happy enough to live this way. But just as clearly, many more would not, and could not tolerate others doing so—just as most of the nation could not, in the end, abide complicity in the dehumanization represented by slavery, or the "moral diversity" represented by polygamy. Our dominant religious and moral traditions are built upon "commanding truths" that do not allow us to be neutral about these issues.

Here, too, Murray is largely silent, though one may infer that his vision of things might well require us to accommodate an enormous amount of moral diversity, perhaps far more than a modern nation-state could, or should. Indeed, many libertarians do acknowledge that it may be impossible to maintain a strong national state with such a thin, procedural, and morally neutral public culture; and that is perfectly all right with them. For them the state, in the words of the libertarian advocate Albert Jay Nock, is our enemy.

Murray does not want to go that far. But how he would answer such concerns, or how he might support the minimal (but essential) underlying consensus needed to sustain genuine diversity, is far from clear. One hopes so graceful and so lucid a writer will see fit to visit these issues in the future.

Games Patriots Play

Executive Orders
by Tom Clancy
Putnam. 874 pp. $27.95

Reviewed by
Seth Cropsey

EARLY IN his famous novel, Flaubert writes that Emma Bovary "turned away from the calm life for excitement. She loved the sea only for its storms. . . ." An interesting question posed by Tom Clancy's thrillers is whether their bookstore and box-office appeal suggests merely a Bovary-like search for excitement, or whether his readers actually share his view of the world.

SETH CROPSEY *was Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy in the Reagan and Bush administrations.*

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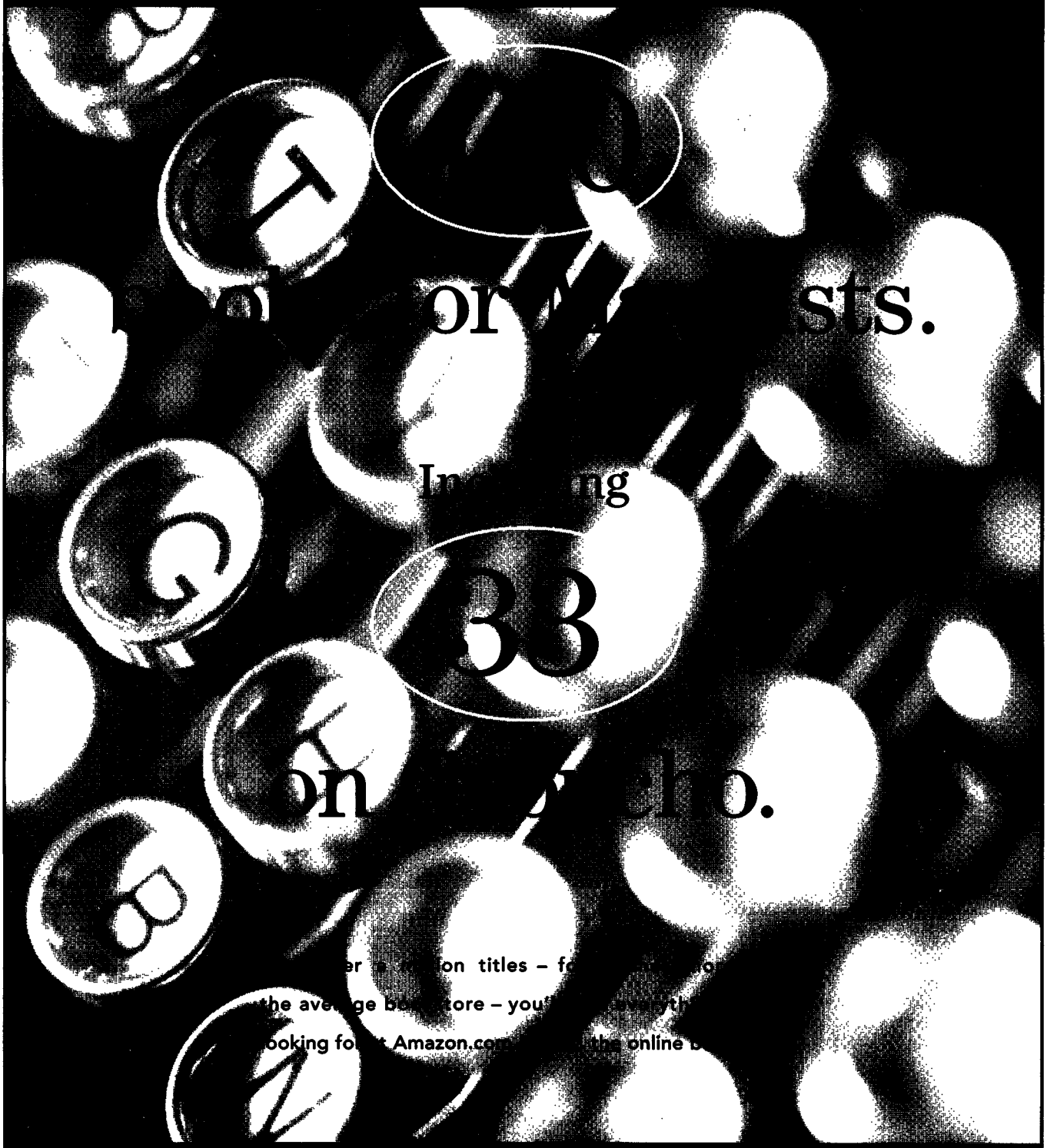

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Consider the popular yarns that have made Clancy wealthy and famous. *The Hunt for Red October*, published in 1984, is a classic cold-war tale about a Soviet submarine and its defection to the West. *Red Storm Rising* (1986) describes a global confrontation between the U.S. and the USSR. In *Patriot Games* (1987), Clancy's hero, Jack Ryan, saves a member of Britain's royal family from assassination and then pays for his good deed when frustrated international terrorists attack his own family. *The Cardinal of the Kremlin* (1988) pictures the Soviets' determined efforts to build a Star Wars missile defense as a shield behind which to wield their aggressive sword. Duplicity and South American drug traffic are the subjects of *Clear and Present Danger* (1989). And the list of timely topics goes on to include Middle Eastern instability, the use of computers as instruments of warfare, and the perils posed by an ineffective Central Intelligence Agency.

The penultimate Clancy thriller, *Debt of Honor* (1994), ends with a Japanese terrorist flying a Boeing 747 into the U.S. Capitol as both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the cabinet have gathered for a presidential State of the Union address. What happens in the aftermath is told in Clancy's ninth and most recent book, *Executive Orders*, which has spent five months on the best-seller lists.

Jack Ryan, now President, must reassemble the leadership of the U.S. government. His task is complicated not only by a disgraced Vice President who publicly questions the new President's legal right to govern but by an evil Iranian mullah, Mahmoud Haji Daryaei, who makes the Ayatollah Khomeini look like a kindly grandfather. At the cleric's direction, Saddam Hussein is killed and his possible successors are neutralized; Iran thereupon absorbs Iraq and moves decisively to seize Saudi Arabia. As the mullah uses military force to achieve Middle Eastern hegemony, Iranian agents bottle a rare airborne strain of the deadly Ebola virus to wage biological warfare against the U.S. Meanwhile, homegrown militia types are striving to achieve some of the same violent ends from inside American borders.

IN ALL his novels Clancy shows skill at juggling several themes at once. But his most obvious talent lies in offering intelligible descriptions of contemporary machinery: a nuclear weapon, the electronic innards of securities trading, the basics of biological warfare. The reader of *Executive Orders*, in particular, is treated to a graphic description of the effects of the Ebola virus on the human body, from the initial flu-like symptoms to the vomiting, delirium, gross distention of organs, disintegration of vascular-system tissue, and eventual massive internal bleeding that ends in death. An equally explicit recipe follows for collecting the virus from a decedent's infected tissue and preserving it alive for travel and dissemination.

In *Executive Orders*, Clancy also conjures up an armed confrontation between the (fictional) United Islamic Republic and the U.S., and along the way depicts the complex intelligence-and-communications support on which contemporary American forces depend for effective combat operations. He is especially good at offering a glimpse into the steel web that was woven by the U.S. in Desert Storm, a war featuring unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's), airborne command-and-control stations, spy satellites, Stealth aircraft, and global-positioning satellites.

As always, Clancy uses this book, too, as a forum for stating his beliefs. Principal among them is that the United States—a decent nation confronted from time to time by states with very bad men at the helm—requires a vigorous defense, but may soon lack enough military power for the job. Unfortunately, *Executive Orders*, like its predecessors, does not afford much insight into the people who are or will be called upon to do the fighting, or into the moral issues raised by military action and diplomacy alike.

IS IT fair to hold Tom Clancy to a literary standard? That depends on the standard. Stephen Coonts, whose action-packed novels about life in the Navy have been praised by Clancy, is a writer whose protagonists are more than stick figures. In *Final Flight* (1988), for example, Coonts tells a story of Middle Eastern intrigue with a Qaddafi-like villain who is foiled by American intrepidity. Along the way he introduces us to some compelling characters. A senior officer must decide whether to do what he wants to do (go on flying) or what he should do (accept the verdict of a junior medical officer on the condition of his aging body); other aviators suffer from lost nerve, still others from misplaced bravado or genuine self-doubt.

Nor is Coonts the only action writer absorbed by questions of character. James Webb, a decorated Vietnam-era Marine who served as Secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration, has published novels positively obsessed with the character of the men who fight, the relationships among them, and the relation between them and the civilians who are politically accountable for the conduct of war. Webb's books (*A Sense of Honor*, *Fields of Fire*, *A Country Such as This*) are studies in courage, responsibility, honor—and their opposites.

Clancy, however, has sold more books. True, his stories demand less of the reader than Webb's or Coonts's, and there can be no denying the excitement they generate. But one also cannot help wondering whether there might not be something else at work to account for his wild success. *Do* Clancy's readers agree with him that simple good and evil exist in the world, and that the U.S. possesses the lion's share of the former? Given the cultural climate in the country today, and what else

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is on offer in the bookstores, such a contrarian belief may, in fact, be as titillating as any tale of international derring-do—and, morally, as thrilling as any of Madame Bovary's ocean storms.

The Personal & the Political

The Inheritance: How Three Families and America Moved From Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond

by Samuel G. Freedman

Simon & Schuster. 464 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Sol Stern

On October 21, 1967, Private First Class Tim Carey, a thin, bespectacled, twenty-year-old draftee from Crotonville, New York, was sent into harm's way for the first and only time in his army service. The position he was ordered to defend, however, was not in the jungles of Vietnam but in bucolic Northern Virginia. PFC Carey and his fellow recruits from the 503rd Military Police Battalion were deployed to protect the Pentagon from 35,000 antiwar demonstrators, many of whom had been bused into Washington, D.C. from elite universities up and down the East coast.

Among those intent on "bringing the war back home," first in the order of battle that day were "flower girls" who attempted to plant daisies and long-stemmed roses in the soldiers' gun barrels. Then came a barrage of rocks, soup cans, and bottles. Finally there was a frontal assault into the 503rd's line by several thousand militants. Frightened and disoriented, Tim Carey found himself engaged in hand-to-hand combat—over a war he himself was not certain America should be fighting.

Before the violence erupted, Carey had heard some of the antiwar speeches broadcast over the demonstrators' sound system. One speaker, who Carey later learned was the comedian Dick Gregory, proclaimed that the ranks of the U.S. armed forces were now filled with "poor blacks" and "dumb whites." More than the nauseating smell of tear gas, or the fear that gripped him, Tim Carey would always remember the tone of contempt in Gregory's voice—that, plus his own disdain for the privileged kids with draft deferments who had their riot in the sun and then returned safely to their college dormitories.

A *mea culpa*. I was also at the Pentagon that day in 1967, both as an antiwar activist and as a writer for *Ramparts*, the flagship publication of the New Left. Although I did not quite approve of throwing bottles at twenty-year-old draftees, considering what I thought to be the overriding cause of ending the war and creating a new American history, neither did I object.

It has been a long while since I stopped believing in the causes of 1967. But not until I read the lives chronicled by Samuel Freedman in *The Inheritance* did I understand that in making enemies out of the likes of Tim Carey, we did indeed create a new American history. Only, it was not the one we intended.

After his discharge from the army, Tim Carey returned to Crotonville for a spell with his parents, and then went off to study at the Albany campus of the State University of New York, where he violated a long-standing family taboo and signed up with the campus Republicans. After graduating, he became a party activist, eventually landing a position as a strategist for the Republican National Committee and a top adviser to George Pataki's 1994 gubernatorial campaign. In that capacity, he helped to engineer one of the more stinging electoral defeats suffered by modern American liberalism in recent years: the toppling of Mario Cuomo from his statehouse throne.

The tale of how and why Tim Carey broke from a legacy of New Deal liberalism and moved to the political Right is one of three personal/family odysseys "from Roosevelt to Reagan and beyond" recounted in *The Inheritance*. While the protest movements of the 1960's and 70's have been adoringly chronicled in countless books, the rank-and-file players who forced a sea-change to the Right in American politics have, up until now, remained faceless, nameless, and abused. "For all their importance," Freedman writes,

> few groups of voters have been so stripped of depth and complexity, even by the politicians who court their support. They have been ridiculed in the form of Archie Bunker. . . . They have been labeled Middle America, the Silent Majority, Joe Six-Pack, and Reagan Democrats. They have been reduced to digits in opinion polls, answers in focus groups, and buzzwords in campaign commercials.

Freedman, whose previous book was *Upon This Rock: The Miracles of a Black Church*,* has thus filled a gaping hole by giving us a richly detailed portrait of the conservative revolution (or counterrevolution if you like) at the grass roots.

Tim Carey was not the only newfound Republican on the Albany campus in the early 1970's. *The Inheritance* also introduces us to Frank Trotta, Jr., an Italian Catholic from New Rochelle, and to Leslie Maeby, a woman of Polish-Catholic origins whose family had originally settled in Baltimore. Carey, Trotta, and Maeby's grandparents had all arrived in this country almost penniless around the turn of the century. For the next 50 years, they and their descendants lived lives utterly typical

Sol Stern *is a contributing editor of the* City Journal.

* Reviewed in Commentary by Glenn Loury, May 1993.

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of the ethnic constituencies at the core of the Democratic party's urban political machine.

For millions of families like these, the Democratic party of the 30's, 40's, and 50's meant many things. It offered acceptance, empowerment, and opportunity, accompanied by an ethic of individual responsibility. And it also provided tangible benefits. Of these, most important were the jobs—sometimes patronage, sometimes in public works, sometimes in private-sector employment spurred by government spending. Thus, Tim Carey's grandmother, Lizzie Garrett, saved from the ravages of the Great Depression by Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, became a Democratic party committeewoman. Frank Trotta's grandfather, Silvia Burgio, an uneducated laborer, fought his way into the plumbers' union and rose to the position of secretary of his local. Leslie Maeby's grandfather, Joseph Obrycki, was a ward-heeler for the Democratic machine in the Polish working-class neighborhood of Baltimore.

In those decades, Democratic dominance could also mean finding an affordable place to live in publicly subsidized housing, one of the party's proudest achievements. Being accepted into public housing was considered a privilege, in exchange for which residents took on certain obligations: keeping their apartments clean and orderly, refraining from immoral conduct, and helping to keep the place free of crime. A good number of residents saved their money and eventually were able to purchase homes and move on, leaving the low-rent apartments available for other families in need.

But nothing better illustrates the growing disillusionment and cynicism so many working-class Democrats eventually came to feel toward the welfare state than the changes in this cherished program. When, for instance, the Hartley Houses went up in New Rochelle in 1949, Frank Trotta, Jr.'s father was able to get a job as a custodian and repairman. Beginning in the 1960's, however, the Hartley Houses entered into a steady deterioration, much of it attributable directly and indirectly to the shifting nature of welfare-state liberalism.

Within a decade of the day Frank Trotta, Sr. reported to work, the social contract that had made the Hartley Houses a decent place to live lay in tatters. Tenants no longer maintained their apartments; graffiti defaced the building; young women were having babies out of wedlock and becoming permanent wards of the welfare system. And when the management attempted to exercise its authority and restore a semblance of order for the good of all, it found itself blocked by Legal Services lawyers paid by taxpayer funds and abetted by activist judges dispensing a new and ever more expansive set of rights.

Frank Trotta, Jr. saw the changes in the Hartley Houses up close through his father's eyes and it affected him much as Tim Carey was affected by his searing experience on the steps of the Pentagon. In Freedman's words, the Hartley Houses had been transformed "from a symbol of activist government assisting the worthy to an emblem of incompetent government indulging the worthless." The agency presiding over that transformation—namely, the Democratic party—could no longer count on the allegiance of the Trotta family.

LIKE MANY of their opposite numbers in the New Left, Tim Carey, Frank Trotta, Jr., and Leslie Maeby (whose family traced a similar path) entered political life out of a deep concern for the future of their country and a desire to gain some control over decisions affecting their lives. Unlike so many of their contemporaries, however, they never took to the streets or contemplated violence; instead, in response to injustice and injury, all three took their passions into the political process, becoming Republican-party activists. Trotta worked as counsel for Lewis Lehrman's 1982 campaign for governor and is now in private law practice. Maeby and Carey both now have high-level positions in the Pataki administration.

Among them, these three typify the political choices made by vast numbers of Americans who first in 1980 and then in 1984 found their champion in Ronald Reagan, and who today are still looking for his successor. Back in the 1960's, we radicals were fond of repeating the mantra that "the personal is political." As Samuel Freedman shows in a book written with a reporter's eye for detail and a novelist's understanding of human character, the truth embedded in that slogan proved to be a sword that cut two ways.

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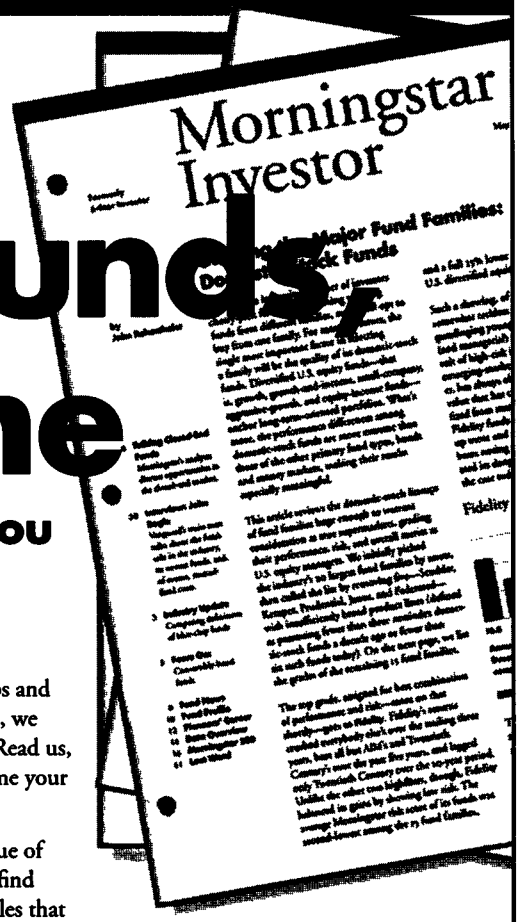

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